

MINUTES
SCHEDULED MEETING

WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL – 4:00PM
Monday 7 September 2026

VENUE:
Reception Room, 25 Liebig Street, Warrnambool

COUNCILLORS:

Cr. Ben Blain (Mayor)

Cr. Debbie Arnott

Cr. Willy Benter

Cr. Billy Edis

Cr. Vicki Jellie AM

Cr. Matthew Walsh

Cr. Richard Ziegeler

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Andrew Mason
CHIEF EXECITIVE OFFICER

WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

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All Open and Special Council Meetings will be video recorded, with the exception of matters identified as confidential items in the agenda. This includes public participation sections of the meeting. Video recordings of meetings will be made available for download on the internet via the Council's website by noon the day following the meeting and will be retained and publicly available on the website for 12 months following the meeting date. The videos will be retained for the term of the current Council, after which time the videos will be archived and destroyed in accordance with applicable public record standards. By participating in Open and Special Council meetings, individuals consent to the use and disclosure of the information that they share at the meeting (including any personal/sensitive information), for the purposes of Council carrying out its functions.

Behaviour At Council Meetings

Thank you all for coming – we really appreciate you being here. These meetings are the place where, we as Councillors, make decisions on a broad range of matters. These can vary greatly in subject, significance and the level of interest or involvement the community has. As part of making these decisions, we are presented with comprehensive information that helps us to form our position – you will find this in the agenda. It should also be remembered that the Council meeting is a "meeting of the Council that is open to the public", not a "public meeting with the Council." Each Council is required to have Governance Rules that pertains to meeting procedures. Warrnambool City Council has followed best practice in this regard and its Governance Rules provides regulations and procedures for the governing and conduct of Council meetings. Copies of the Conduct and Behaviour excerpt from Warrnambool City Council's Governance Rules can be obtained online at www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au. We thank you in anticipation of your co-operation in this matter.

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MINUTES OF THE SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL HELD IN THE RECEPTION ROOM, WARRNAMBOOL CIVIC CENTRE, 25 LIEBIG STREET, WARRNAMBOOL ON MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2026 COMMENCING AT 4:00 PM

PRESENT: Cr. Ben Blain, Mayor/Chairman
Cr. Willy Benter
Cr. Billy Edis
Cr. Vicki Jellie AM
Cr. Matthew Walsh
Cr. Richard Ziegeler

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Andrew Mason, Chief Executive Officer - Virtual
Mr Peter Utri, Director Corporate Services
Mr Luke Coughlan, Director City Futures - Virtual
Ms Brooke Love, Director City Wellbeing
Mr James Plozza, Manager Governance
Ms Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant

1. Opening Prayer & Original Custodians Statement

Almighty God
Grant to this Council
Wisdom, understanding and Sincerity of purpose
For the Good Governance of this City
Amen.

Original Custodians Statement

Council acknowledges the Peek Whurrong and Kirrae Whurrung Peoples of the Maar Nation, their land, waterways and skies within the Warrnambool municipality. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

2. Apologies

Cr Debbie Arnott

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH
SECONDED: CR VICKI JELLIE

That the apology from Cr Debbie Arnott be accepted.

CARRIED - 6:0

3. Confirmation Of Minutes

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH
SECONDED: CR BILLY EDIS

That the Minutes of the Scheduled Meeting of Council held on 3 August 2026, be confirmed.

CARRIED - 6:0

4. Declaration By Councillors And Officers Of Any Conflict Of Interest In Any Item On The Agenda

Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) (**the Act**) provides that a relevant person must disclose a conflict of interest in respect of a matter and exclude themselves from the decision making process in relation to that matter including any discussion or vote on the matter at any Council meeting or delegated committee meeting and any action in relation to that matter.

Section 126(2) of the Act sets out that a relevant person (Councillor, member of a delegated Committee or member of Council staff) has a conflict of interest if the relevant person has a **general conflict of interest** within the meaning of section 127 of the Act or a **material conflict of interest** within the meaning of section 128 of the Act.

A relevant person has a **general conflict of interest** in a matter if an impartial, fair minded person would consider that the person's private interests could result in that person acting in a manner that is contrary to their public duty.

A relevant person has a **material conflict of interest** in a matter if an affected person would gain a benefit or suffer a loss depending on the outcome of the matter.

A Councillor who has declared a conflict of interest, must leave the meeting and remain outside the room while the matter is being considered, or any vote is taken. Councillors are also encouraged to declare circumstances where there may be a perceived conflict of interest.

Nil.

5. Mayoral Presentation

It has been a really busy month; we had the Japanese Garden tree planting and it's great to see that we've got the Banksia back in the Japanese Gardens and it was great to hear from our sister city Miura as well and their support for us to reinstate the tree.

Regional Cities Victoria and South West Alliance Parliamentary event was really well received over this month as well.

We did receive a visit from a delegation from Changchun; looking around opportunities between Warrnambool especially in the hydrogen, tourism and worker exchange spaces.

There was a new memorial that the RSL were lucky enough to receive $10,000 for from the Federal Government that was unveiled as well, so that was a really great outcome for everyone up their at the RSL, you should get up there and check it out.

And the Early Learning Child Care Cente announcement; so this is a bitter sweet announcement for Council where they State Government are funding a brand new child care entre that will have 160 places out at Deakin and because of that, once that service is up and going, we'll be closing our service as well. But it will result in more child care places for everyone. So it is a really positive announcement and it's also going to work closely with Deakin to be actually training more educators, especially around not just the TAFE, the diplomas but also the Bachelor of Education as well, so it's a really good outcome for Warrnambool.

6. Public Question Time

6.1 Question From Luke Atkinson, Warrnambool

Last Month Cr Jellie said "West Warrnambool Neighborhood House was one our best projects completed for well under a million dollars" According to the Standard on the 28th of Feb 2025 "West Warrnambool Neighborhood House opens" the cost was over a million dollars. So how much did the West Warrnambool Neighborhood House project actually cost to ratepayers?

RESPONSE

Like to thank Luke for his question. The final cost of Council delivering the West Warrnambool Neighbourhood was $758,000 excluding GST. Of this amount $659,000 related to the building itself, with the balance covering works including landscaping, site preparation, CCTV and Powercor connections.

We do note that in May 2024 awarded a building contract for $631,000 excluding GST and authorised up to a further $400,000 for works outside the contract. The additional amount was a maximum spend authority to cover project uncertainties and unfortunately we have been nowhere near that amount. So just confirming that the project was delivered well under a $1million dollars at $758,000.

6.22 Question from Aileen Moorfield, Warrnambool

On our August 2026 rate notices Warrnambool Council has not put definitions for the house property valuation terms, like they did last year.

Q. Is the definition for "Net Annual value" of residential properties in Warrnambool the same as on the August 2025 rates notice "Estimated Annual Income generated"?

or has this been rectified?

RESPONSE

In short Mr Mayor, the issue has been or the incorrect definition has been rectified. So it's firstly really important to note that Council does not use net annual value for the calculation of rates and we haven't in the past and we're not planning to in the future. Instead we use the capital improved value methodology which most councils use.

We are required by the government to have the Net Annual Value listed on our notices. Because of the error in the previous notices, we've removed the definition. We have however provided the definition in our Revenue and Rating Plan which was revised in June 2026 and the definition used by Council is consistent with the definition in the Valuation of Land Act.

7. Reports

7.1. Open Space Policy

DIRECTORATE : City Futures

Purpose:

This report provides updated information on the Open Space Policy 2026 post recent adoption of the Open Space Strategy 2026-2041 and Open Space Contributions Report July 2026 and is recommended for adoption.

Executive Summary

- The Warrnambool City Council Open Space Policy applies to all open space under the management or ownership of Warrnambool City Council. It also applies to private land under agreement or negotiation to become future open space under the management or ownership of Warrnambool City Council.
- The Warrnambool Open Space Policy 2026 expresses Council's strategic policy in relation to the planning and delivery of open space.
- The policy helps implement the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy 2026-2041 (OSS) and the Warrnambool Open Space Contributions Report (OSC) July 2026.
- The OSS was adopted by Council in June 2026 and supersedes the Open Space Strategy 2014. The OSC Report was adopted by Council in August 2026 and does not supersede any previous contributions reports.
- It is Council's position that the open space network of Warrnambool should be: Accessible, adaptable, connected, efficient and sustainable, diverse, equitable, and protective of the environment.
- Consultation with the Project Working Group (PWG) during the OSS review concluded that we should add '*and sustainable*' to the strategic policy, where this had been excluded from the previous policy.
- Key changes include the hierarchy of open space with the addition of pocket parks, a new policy statement, new objectives and terminology.
- The OSC report implements new contribution rates under the *Subdivision Act 1988* for subdivisions across the municipality.
- It is recommended that Council adopt the Open Space Policy 2026.

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH
SECONDED: CR RICHARD ZIEGELER

That Council:

1. Revoke the Open Space Policy 2025.
2. Adopt the Open Space Policy 2026.
3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to make minor administrative and editorial amendments to the Policy that do not materially alter its intent or operation.

CARRIED - 6:0

Background / Previous Reporting

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide Council and the community with a clear direction and priority for open space planning and delivery until 2041.

Open space is essential infrastructure. A high quality, well connected network of open space provides health and wellbeing, environmental and ecological values including habitat for fauna and flora, and economic benefits to a community through activating precincts and activity centres and providing spaces for future events and tourism opportunities. Open space supports not only local residents but also those that work, study, and visit the city.

The city is supported by a significant amount of public open space as well as conservation land and the foreshore which provides access to a diverse range of experiences. As the city continues to grow over the next 15 years the capacity and useability of the existing open space assets, along with additional open space provided through the growth areas will need to be integrated into a high quality and financial sustainable network.

The new policy statement includes:

The open space network protects and enhances the environmental values of Warrnambool while also providing spaces for the community to exercise, build social connection, access education, and relax. The future open space network will be planned and maintained to be adaptable to changing community and climate needs while also using financially sustainable approaches'

This has been updated in accordance with feedback received throughout the OSS engagement activities.

The Warrnambool Open Space Policy 2026 expresses Council's strategic policy in relation to the planning and delivery of open space.

It is Council's position that the open space network of Warrnambool should be:

Accessible

- Provide a variety of open spaces that are accessible and inclusive for all residents, regardless of age, ability and culture.
- Ensure that all residents should have at least one open space within walking distance of their home.
- Ensure that in urban areas, 95% of dwellings should be within 400m of open space.
- Ensure that across the whole LGA, 95% of dwellings should be within a 10min of district open space and 20min drive of regional open space.

Adaptable

- Ensure open space is flexible, multi-use and provide opportunities for passive and active recreation that is responsive to community needs.

Connected

- Open space corridors and shared trails that improve the connectivity of the network and provide links for walking, cycling and biodiversity movement.

Efficient and sustainable

- Consider adaptability and maintenance in the development and management of open space.

Diverse

- Provide a variety of experiences and cater for a range of recreational needs.
- 95% of open space land that is over 0.2ha (local open space and above) should have 2 or more functions

Equitable

- Access to open space will be distributed as fairly as possible across the municipality.

Protective of the environment

- Preserve and enhance the biodiversity and environmental values across open space while providing appropriate public access to waterways and coastal environments.

To achieve the open space vision, the Strategy is guided by three (3) objectives. These objectives include indicators to measure the impact of change over the life of the strategy as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Open space objectives and indicators

Objectives	Indicators of success
Objective 1: To provide an equitable distribution and connection to open space across the city.	95% of dwellings in urban areas are within a 400m walkable catchment of open space
Objective 2: To ensure all open space has a clear purpose and supported by multiple functions.	All open space has a clear function. All open space greater than 0.2ha has a minimum of 2 functions
Objective 3: To provide a financially sustainable, adaptable and resilient open space network that can support future generations	30% tree canopy cover across the open space network

The classification of individual open spaces can be found in the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Hierarchy of open space

Hierarchy of open space	Size
Regional open space is a municipal destination. Infrastructure provided in regional spaces support longer stay times and typically accommodate substantial infrastructure and facilities that can cater to a large number of people. These spaces cater to users from across Warrnambool and, for some, the wider region. Examples include Lake Pertobe Recreation Reserve, Albert Park Reserve and Victoria Park.	15ha+
District open space is a destination that services a precinct. They can accommodate different activities and different user groups simultaneously. They are large enough to accommodate formalised sporting functions such as courts and playing fields; however, to include formalised sport, they must be at least 8ha in size. Infrastructure provided on district spaces supports longer stay times. Examples include Botanic Gardens, Brierly Recreation Reserve, Allansford Recreation Reserve, and Dennington Recreation Reserve.	5-15ha
Neighbourhood open space is large enough to accommodate multiple open space functions. In rural settings they may include formalised sports uses (e.g. 1 oval), however they need to be a minimum of 5ha. They are intended to service a catchment of surrounding suburbs for a medium length of stay. Examples include D.W. Jones Oval Reserve, A.H Davidson Oval, Manuka Dr Reserve, and Bushfield Recreation Reserve.	1-5ha
Local open space is intended as walkable locations for immediate residents. They can provide a range of passive open space functions, however, only for short stays. Examples include Witham Park Reserve, Toohey Estate Reserve, Motang Drive Reserve, and Water Tower Reserve.	0.2-1ha
Pocket parks are very small parcels of open space which can contribute to improving amenity and providing 'pockets' of green relief. Due to their size, they have limited functions and therefore require limited infrastructure. Pocket parks should not be prioritised as new open space due to the limitations on their use, rather they should only be delivered to fill accessibility gaps or increase greening in urban areas. Examples include Iona Avenue Reserve, Boronia Court, Mechanics Institute Park and Shrader Park.	0.2 ha and under

Functions on open space refers to the purposes and activities for which the land is developed and managed. To meet the diverse needs of the community multi-functional spaces (more than one function) should be provided on all local open space and higher order open space. The allocation of functions also ensures that the role of the open space is clear along with the supporting infrastructure required e.g. sport the civic, nature, linkage, events, play, social, story, art and education, vistas and dog walking.

The OSC Report includes new contribution rates relevant to land density expressed by residential land and rural and low-density land typology. The municipal wide application applies an equitable distribution to all land and is triggered via land subdivision applications of three (3) or more lot subdivisions.

Table 3. Open Space Contributions

Type or location of subdivision	Current amount of contribution for public open space	Recommended amount of contribution for public open space
Land within the North of the Merri River Structure Plan	1.67%	No change
Land within the North Dennington Structure Plan area (excluding Dennington Rise)	3%	No change
Land covered by the incorporated East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan	3.81% (Draft for consultation at the time of writing this report)	No change
All other employment and residential land (other than land zoned Rural Living and Low Density Residential)	Up to 5% (through the Subdivision Act)	5.17%
Land zoned Rural Living and Low Density Residential	Up to 5% (through the Subdivision Act)	4.65%

Officers will review this policy for any necessary amendments every 4 years.

Issues

The Open Space Strategy 2014 expired in 2024. As such the suite of Open Space reporting was required to be reviewed and updated.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact involved in the adoption of the Open Space Policy 2026.

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

Internal Council Documents

- Warrnambool Open Space Strategy 2026-2041
- Warrnambool Open Space Contributions Report July 2026
- Warrnambool City Council - Council Plan 2025-2029
- Warrnambool Community Vision
- Asset Management Plan
- Healthy Warrnambool 2025-2029
- Green Warrnambool Plan 2018
- Active Warrnambool Strategy 2025-35
- Play Space Strategic Framework 2025
- Warrnambool Foreshore Strategic Framework Plan
- Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan 2013
- Structure Plans, Master Plans, Concept Plans, Detailed Landscape Plans

External Strategic Documents

- Warrnambool Planning Scheme
- Plans for Victoria
- Open Space for Everyone 2021
- Guide for open space strategy 2025
- Precinct Structure Plan Guidelines: New Communities in Victoria 2021

- Open Space Planning and Design Guide, Parks and Leisure Australia (2013)
- Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria, State of Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment (2005).

Timing

The version as attached is recommended for approval. Officers are seeking feedback from Executive as to whether the internal policy can be approved under delegation. If not, the recommendation can be raised at the next available Council Meeting.

Internal / External Consultation

No direct consultation was undertaken in relation to this updated policy. Extensive consultation was undertaken through the development of the Open Space Strategy and the Open Space Contributions report. The updated policy reflects the directions within the adopted strategy, and it is considered that appropriate consultation has already occurred on this matter. The community can access the Open Space Policy via the Warrnambool City Council website.

Legal Risk / Impact

No legal risk or impact.

Officers' Declaration of Interest

No conflict of interest.

Collaborative Procurement

There are no collaborative procurement agreements as part of this project.

Conclusion

The Warrnambool Open Space Policy applies to all open space under the management or ownership of Warrnambool City Council. It expresses Council's strategic policy in relation to the planning and delivery of open space. The policy helps implement the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy.

The Open Space Strategy 2026-2041 and the Open Space Contribution Report July 2026 provide the strategic justification coupled with technical analysis to implement municipal wide open space actions and contributions.

It is recommended that Council adopt the Open Space Policy 2026.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Open Space Policy - Track Changes [**7.1.1** - 8 pages]
2. Open Space Policy - Clean Version [**7.1.2** - 6 pages]
3. Open Space Strategy [**7.1.3** - 50 pages]
4. Open Space Contributions Report [**7.1.4** - 29 pages]

WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Open Space Policy

POLICY TYPE: COUNCIL
APPROVAL DATE: SEPTEMBER 2026
REVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 2030

OPEN SPACE POLICY

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	*Open Space Policy*
Policy Type:	*Council*
Responsible Branch:	*City Futures*
Responsible Officer:	*Director City Futures*
Document Status:	*Adopted*
Approved By:	*Council*
Adopted Date:	*September 2026*
Review Date:	*September 2030*
Current Version:	*1.~~3~~2*

~~Note: the Open Space Strategy 2014 (OSS), is currently being reviewed. Information in this Policy will be subject to change pending the outcome of the OSS review.~~

OPEN SPACE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

~~Warrnambool offers a large and well-used network of parks and reserves, which contribute significantly to our coastal lifestyle and attract visitors to our City.~~

~~From the wild coastline to the popular Lake Pertobe, the residents of Warrnambool value our open spaces and the benefits they provide. Ensuring the open space network is preserved and enhanced for current and future residents is an important role of Council.~~

~~Warrnambool City is experiencing steady population growth. By 2036, it is anticipated that the City's population will be around 39,000 people with the growth occurring across all age groups. This growth, along with accompanying population growth across the wider region, impacts on the demand for open space across the city.~~

~~The purpose of this policy is to provide the general community, developers and Council staff with an understanding of Council's objectives and approach to providing for open space in Warrnambool.~~

The City of Warrnambool is a prominent regional centre located along the south-west coast of Victoria. It is Victoria's largest coastal regional city beyond Port Phillip Bay. The city will experience moderate growth, from a population of 36,150 in 20242 to approximately 45,000 by 20463.

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide Council and the community with a clear direction and priority for open space planning and delivery until 2041.

Open space is essential infrastructure. A high quality, well connected network of open space provides health and wellbeing, environmental, and economic benefits to a community. Open space supports not only local residents but also those that work, study, and visit the city.

The city is supported by a significant amount of public open space as well as conservation land and the foreshore which provides access to a diverse range of experiences. As the city continues to grow over the next 15 years the capacity and useability of the existing open space assets, along with additional open space provided through the growth areas will need to be integrated into a high quality and financial sustainable network.

1.2. Scope

The Warrnambool City Council Open Space Policy applies to all open space under the management or ownership of Warrnambool City Council, within the municipality of Warrnambool. It also applies to private land under agreement or negotiation to become future open space under the management or ownership of Warrnambool City Council.

1.3. Definitions

Open Space	~~Publically owned land set aside for leisure, recreation, and nature conservation purposes. It includes pockets of natural landscape within the urban area, sports reserves, and areas of high scenic, cultural or conservation value.~~ Is publicly owned and accessible land in which the primary purpose is recreation, leisure, and outdoor enjoyment. It includes parks, gardens, sport reserves, and natural areas.

2. REFERENCES

2.1. Internal Council Documents

- Warrnambool City Council - Council Plan 2021~~5~~-2029~~5~~
- Warrnambool 2040 Community Vision~~Plan~~
- Asset Management Plan
- Warrnambool City Council – Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2025~~1~~-2025~~9~~
- Warrnambool Planning Scheme
- Green Warrnambool ~~Plan 2018~~
- Active Warrnambool Strategy 2025-35~~19~~
- ~~Merri River Parklands Framework 2020~~
- Play Space Strategic Framework 2025
- Warrnambool Coastal Management plan 2013
- Warrnambool Foreshore Strategic Framework Plan

2.2. External References

- ~~Open Space Planning and Design Guide, Parks and Leisure Australia (2013)~~
- ~~Safer Design Guidelines for Victoria, State of Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment (2005).~~
- Plans for Victoria
- Open Space For Everyone 2021
- Guide for Open Space Strategy 2025
- Precinct Structure
- Plan Guidelines : New Comunities in Victoria 2021

3. POLICY

3.1. Policy Statement

~~Warrnambool will have a high quality, diverse, accessible open space network that supports cultural connection, reflects community needs, and enhances social connection, environmental protection and economic benefit.~~

The open space network protects and enhances the environmental values of Warrnambool while also providing spaces for the community to exercise, build social connection, access education, and relax. The future open space network will be planned and maintained to be adaptable to changing community and climate needs while also using financially sustainable approaches.

3.2. Principles

The Warrnambool Open Space Policy expresses Council's strategic policy in relation to the planning and delivery of open space. The policy helps implement the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy.

It is Council's position that the open space network of Warrnambool should be:

Accessible

- ~~Provide a variety of open spaces that are safe and accessible to all residents, regardless of age, ability and culture.~~
- ~~Ensure universal access is incorporated when open spaces with a recreational function are created or upgraded.~~

- ~~Ensure that all residents have access to at least one open space within walking distance of their home.~~
- Provide a variety of open spaces that are accessible and inclusive for all residents, regardless of age, ability and culture.
- Ensure that all residents should have at least one open space within walking distance of their home.
- Ensure that in urban areas, 95% of dwellings should be within 400m of open space.
- Ensure that across the whole LGA, 95% of dwellings should be within a 10min of district and 20min drive of regional open space.

Adaptable

- ~~Ensure open space is flexible, multi-use and provides opportunities for passive and active recreation that is responsive to community needs.~~
- ~~Ensure that adaptability and multi-functionality is incorporated into the design and development of neighbourhood or above open spaces.~~
- Ensure open space is flexible, multi-use and provide opportunities for passive and active recreation that is responsive to community needs

Connected

- ~~Incorporate open space corridors and shared trails that improve the connectivity of the network and provide links for walking, cycling and biodiversity movement.~~
  ~~Improve connectivity along the Merri River corridor and other major waterways~~
- Open space corridors and shared trails that improve the connectivity of the network and provide links for walking, cycling and biodiversity movement.

Diverse

- ~~Provide a variety of experiences and cater for a range of recreational needs.~~
- Provide a variety of experiences and cater for a range of recreational needs.
- 95% of open space land that is over 0.2ha (local open space and above) should have 2 or more functions

Efficient and Sustainable

- ~~Consider adaptability and maintenance in the development and management of open space.~~
- ~~Ensure that open space infrastructure in new or redeveloped open spaces is appropriate to its hierarchy and category.~~
- ~~Ensure that asset renewal, maintenance and whole of life costs are considered in the design process for development and redevelopment of open spaces.~~
- Consider adaptability and maintenance in the development and management of open space.

Equitable

- ~~Access to open space will be distributed as fairly as possible across the municipality.~~
- ~~Ensure that there is no net loss of open space from the open space network.~~
- ~~Provide new recreation infrastructure and open space when developing precinct structure plans, development plans, or in areas where significant gaps in provision are identified~~
- Access to open space will be distributed as fairly as possible across the municipality.

Protective of the environment

- ~~Preserve and enhance areas with environmental values and provide appropriate public access to waterways and coastal environments.~~
- ~~Ensure that where conservation has been identified as the primary function of a reserve, other uses must be compatible with this.~~
- ~~Ensure that new open spaces or redevelopments demonstrate environmentally sustainable design principles.~~
- ~~Incorporate areas of high environmental value into the open space network as the opportunity arises~~

- ~~Indigenous only species should be planted in and adjoining open spaces where the primary function has been identified as conservation (as per the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy)~~
- Preserve and enhance the biodiversity and environmental values across open space while providing appropriate public access to waterways and coastal environments.

~~**Reflective of local knowledge and partnerships**~~

- ~~Work in collaboration with Eastern Maar people in decisions regarding cultural landscapes~~
- ~~Work in community partnerships where possible to leverage Council resources and provide more collaborative outcomes that reflect community needs~~

3.3. Objectives and Indicators

To achieve the open space vision, the Strategy is guided by 3 objectives. These objectives include indicators to measure the impact of change over the life of the strategy as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Open space objectives and indicators

Objectives	Indicators of success
Objective 1: To provide an equitable distribution and connection to open space across the city.	95% of dwellings in urban areas are within a 400m walkable catchment of open space
Objective 2: To ensure all open space has a clear purpose and supported by multiple functions.	All open space has a clear function. All open space greater than 0.2ha has a minimum of 2 functions
Objective 3: To provide a financially sustainable, adaptable and resilient open space network that can support future generations	30% tree canopy cover across the open space network

~~3.3.~~3.4. Open Space - Hierarchy

Council supports the development of open space as set out in Table ~~2~~1.

The classification of individual open spaces can be found in the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy and corporate Council GIS.

Table ~~2~~1. Hierarchy of open space

OPEN SPACE POLICY

~~Open Space~~	~~Description~~
~~Regional~~	~~High-profile parks that attract users from within and beyond the municipality and cater for a broad cross-section of ages. Regional open spaces are characterised by their uniqueness and provide significant environmental, social, recreational, heritage, amenity or tourism value. They may offer a large range of recreational opportunities, or alternatively, highly specialised facilities not present in other open spaces in the region.~~
~~Municipal~~	~~Medium to large parks which provide recreational and leisure opportunities to residents primarily from within the municipality. Users may need to travel a short distance to reach the park. Municipal open spaces offer a range of recreational opportunities and attract high visitation by local residents.~~
~~Neighbourhood~~	~~Relatively small parks that offer limited recreational opportunities to the community of an area, and provide a social meeting place for local residents. Intended for frequent, short duration visits within a walking or cycling distance of users.~~
~~Local~~	~~Small parks which cater primarily for residents in the immediate area. Local open spaces offer a limited number of recreational opportunities, such as a small playground and a grassed area for informal uses. These parks are intended for frequent, short duration visits within a short walking distance of users.~~

Heirarchy of open space	Size
Regional open space is a municipal destination. Infrastructure provided in regional spaces support longer stay times and typically accommodate substantial infrastructure and facilities that can cater to a large number of people. These spaces cater to users from across Warrnambool and, for some, the wider region. Examples include Lake Pertobe Recreation Reserve, Albert Park Reserve and Victoria Park.	15ha+
District open space is a destination that services a precinct. They can accommodate different activities and different user groups simultaneously. They are large enough to accommodate formalised sporting functions such as courts and playing fields; however, to include formalised sport, they must be at least 8ha in size. Infrastructure provided on district spaces supports longer stay times. Examples include Botanic Gardens, Brierly Recreation Reserve, Allansford Recreation Reserve, and Dennington Recreation Reserve.	5-15ha
Neighbourhood open space is large enough to accommodate multiple open space functions. In rural settings they may include formalised sports uses (e.g. 1 oval), however they need to be a minimum of 5ha. They are intended to service a catchment of surrounding suburbs for a medium length of stay. Examples include D.W. Jones Oval Reserve, A.H Davidson Oval, Manuka Dr Reserve, and Bushfield Recreation Reserve.	1-5ha
Local open space is intended as walkable locations for immediate residents. They can provide a range of passive open space functions, however, only for short stays. Examples include Witham Park Reserve, Toohey Estate Reserve, Motang Drive Reserve, and Water Tower Reserve.	0.2-1ha
Pocket parks are very small parcels of open space which can contribute to improving amenity and providing 'pockets' of green relief. Due to their size, they have limited functions and therefore require limited infrastructure. Pocket parks should not be prioritised as new open space due to the limitations on their use, rather they should only be delivered to fill accessibility gaps or increase greening in urban areas. Examples include Iona Avenue Reserve, Boronia Court, Mechanics Institute Park and Shrader Park.	0.2 ha and under

3.5 Functions in Open Space

Functions on open space refers to the purposes and activities for which the land is developed and managed. To meet the diverse needs of the community multi-functional spaces (more than one function) should be provided on all local open space and higher order open space. The allocation of functions also ensures that the role of the open space is clear along with the supporting infrastructure required e.g. sport the civic, nature, linkage, events, play, social, story, art and education, vistas and dog walking.

4. GOVERNANCE

4.1. Owner

Director City Futures

4.2. Review

Director City Futures ~~will review the policy for any necessary amendments only once the Open Space Strategy has been renewed and adopted by Council, and not later than 24 months after approval of this version of the Policy. .~~ will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than 4 years after its formulation or after the last review.

4.3. Compliance Responsibility

Executive Management Team

- The Chief Executive and Directors are responsible for ensuring Managers, Supervisors, and Employees under their control comply with the actions detailed in this policy.

Managers and Supervisors

- Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring Employees under their direct control comply with the actions detailed in this policy (and related procedures).
- Demonstrate Warrnambool City Council values through being positive role models for this policy.
- Ensure any revised or newly developed policies/procedures are communicated appropriately to all relevant staff.

4.4. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of its employees.

WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Open Space Policy

POLICY TYPE: COUNCIL
APPROVAL DATE: SEPTEMBER 2026
REVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 2030

OPEN SPACE POLICY

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	*Open Space Policy*
Policy Type:	*Council*
Responsible Branch:	*City Futures*
Responsible Officer:	*Director City Futures*
Document Status:	*Adopted*
Approved By:	*Council*
Adopted Date:	*September 2026*
Review Date:	*September 2030*

OPEN SPACE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

The City of Warrnambool is a prominent regional centre located along the south-west coast of Victoria. It is Victoria's largest coastal regional city beyond Port Phillip Bay. The city will experience moderate growth, from a population of 36,150 in 20242 to approximately 45,000 by 20463.

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide Council and the community with a clear direction and priority for open space planning and delivery until 2041.

Open space is essential infrastructure. A high quality, well connected network of open space provides health and wellbeing, environmental, and economic benefits to a community. Open space supports not only local residents but also those that work, study, and visit the city.

The city is supported by a significant amount of public open space as well as conservation land and the foreshore which provides access to a diverse range of experiences. As the city continues to grow over the next 15 years the capacity and useability of the existing open space assets, along with additional open space provided through the growth areas will need to be integrated into a high quality and financial sustainable network.

1.2. Scope

The Open Space Policy applies to all open space under the management or ownership of Warrnambool City Council, within the municipality of Warrnambool. It also applies to private land under agreement or negotiation to become future open space under the management or ownership of Warrnambool City Council.

1.3. Definitions

Open Space	Is publicly owned and accessible land in which the primary purpose is recreation, leisure, and outdoor enjoyment. It includes parks, gardens, sport reserves, and natural areas.

2. REFERENCES

2.1. Internal Council Documents

- Warrnambool City Council - Council Plan 2025-2029
- Warrnambool 2040 Community Vision
- Asset Management Plan
- Warrnambool City Council – Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2025-2029
- Warrnambool Planning Scheme
- Green Warrnambool
- Active Warrnambool Strategy 2025-35
- Play Space Strategic Framework 2025
- Warrnambool Coastal Management plan 2013
- Warrnambool Foreshore Strategic Framework Plan

2.2. External References

- Plans for Victoria
- Open Space For Everyone 2021
- Guide for Open Space Strategy 2025
- Precinct Structure
- Plan Guidelines: New Communities in Victoria 2021

3. POLICY

3.1. Policy Statement

The open space network protects and enhances the environmental values of Warrnambool while also providing spaces for the community to exercise, build social connection, access education, and relax. The future open space network will be planned and maintained to be adaptable to changing community and climate needs while also using financially sustainable approaches.

3.2. Principles

The Warrnambool Open Space Policy expresses Council's strategic policy in relation to the planning and delivery of open space. The policy helps implement the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy.

It is Council's position that the open space network of Warrnambool should be:

Accessible
- Provide a variety of open spaces that are accessible and inclusive for all residents, regardless of age, ability and culture.
- Ensure that all residents should have at least one open space within walking distance of their home.
- Ensure that in urban areas, 95% of dwellings should be within 400m of open space.
- Ensure that across the whole LGA, 95% of dwellings should be within a 10min of district and 20min drive of regional open space.

Adaptable
- Ensure open space is flexible, multi-use and provide opportunities for passive and active recreation that is responsive to community needs

Connected
- Open space corridors and shared trails that improve the connectivity of the network and provide links for walking, cycling and biodiversity movement.

Diverse
- Provide a variety of experiences and cater for a range of recreational needs.
- 95% of open space land that is over 0.2ha (local open space and above) should have 2 or more functions

Efficient and Sustainable
- Consider adaptability and maintenance in the development and management of open space.

Equitable
- Access to open space will be distributed as fairly as possible across the municipality.

Protective of the environment

- Preserve and enhance the biodiversity and environmental values across open space while providing appropriate public access to waterways and coastal environments.

3.3. Objectives and Indicators

To achieve the open space vision, the Strategy is guided by 3 objectives. These objectives include indicators to measure the impact of change over the life of the strategy as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Open space objectives and indicators

Objectives	Indicators of success
Objective 1: To provide an equitable distribution and connection to open space across the city.	95% of dwellings in urban areas are within a 400m walkable catchment of open space
Objective 2: To ensure all open space has a clear purpose and supported by multiple functions.	All open space has a clear function. All open space greater than 0.2ha has a minimum of 2 functions
Objective 3: To provide a financially sustainable, adaptable and resilient open space network that can support future generations	30% tree canopy cover across the open space network

3.4. Open Space - Hierarchy

Council supports the development of open space as set out in Table 2.

The classification of individual open spaces can be found in the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy and corporate Council GIS.

Table 2. Hierarchy of open space

Hierarchy of open space	Size
Regional open space is a municipal destination. Infrastructure provided in regional spaces support longer stay times and typically accommodate substantial infrastructure and facilities that can cater to a large number of people. These spaces cater to users from across Warrnambool and, for some, the wider region. Examples include Lake Pertobe Recreation Reserve, Albert Park Reserve and Victoria Park.	15ha+
District open space is a destination that services a precinct. They can accommodate different activities and different user groups simultaneously. They are large enough to accommodate formalised sporting functions such as courts and playing fields; however, to include formalised sport, they must be at least 8ha in size. Infrastructure provided on district spaces supports longer stay times. Examples include Botanic Gardens, Brierly Recreation Reserve, Allansford Recreation Reserve, and Dennington Recreation Reserve.	5-15ha
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Local open space is intended as walkable locations for immediate residents. They can provide a range of passive open space functions, however, only for short stays. Examples include Witham Park Reserve, Toohey Estate Reserve, Motang Drive Reserve, and Water Tower Reserve.	0.2-1ha

Hierarchy of open space	Size
Pocket parks are very small parcels of open space which can contribute to improving amenity and providing 'pockets' of green relief. Due to their size, they have limited functions and therefore require limited infrastructure. Pocket parks should not be prioritised as new open space due to the limitations on their use, rather they should only be delivered to fill accessibility gaps or increase greening in urban areas. Examples include Iona Avenue Reserve, Boronia Court, Mechanics Institute Park and Shrader Park.	0.2 ha and under

3.5 Functions in Open Space

Functions on open space refers to the purposes and activities for which the land is developed and managed. To meet the diverse needs of the community multi-functional spaces (more than one function) should be provided on all local open space and higher order open space. The allocation of functions also ensures that the role of the open space is clear along with the supporting infrastructure required e.g. sport the civic, nature, linkage, events, play, social, story, art and education, vistas and dog walking.

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4.1. Owner

Director City Futures

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WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Open Space Strategy 2026-41

May 2026



www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au



Adopted by Council June 2026

This report has been prepared for Warrnambool City Council. SGS Economics and Planning has taken all due care in the preparation of this report. However, SGS and its associated consultants are not liable to any person or entity for any damage or loss that has occurred, or may occur, in relation to that person or entity taking or not taking action in respect of any representation, statement, opinion or advice referred to herein.

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OFFICES IN CANBERRA, HOBART, MELBOURNE, AND SYDNEY ON THE COUNTRY OF THE NGAMBRI/NGUNNAWAL/NGARIGO, MUWININA/PALAWA, WURUNDJERI, AND GADIGAL PEOPLES.

Glossary

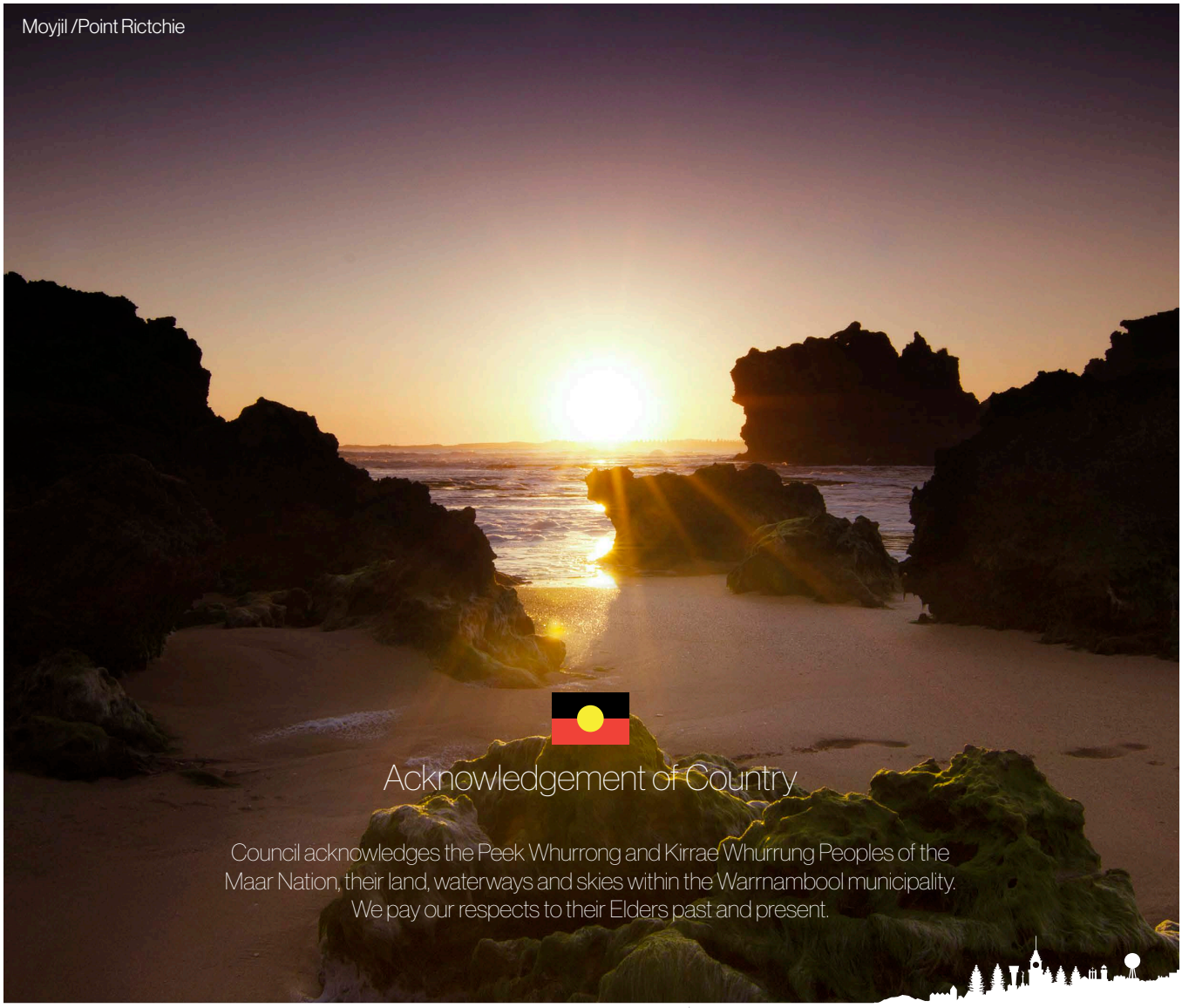
Term	Definition
Council	Warrnambool City Council
Encumbered land	Is land in which the primary purpose is not open space; however, it may provide some supplementary access. However, this is not always granted or available. Generally, the primary purposes for this land are transport, drainage, and utilities.
Local Government Area (LGA)	Warrnambool Local Government Area
Net Developable Area (NDA)	Land that is available for development. This excludes encumbered land, arterial roads, railway corridors, significant heritage, schools and community facilities and public open space. It includes lots, local streets and connector streets. Net Developable Area may be expressed in terms of hectare units (i.e. NDHa).
Precinct	The Warrnambool LGA is divided into 11 Open Space Precincts which support local area open space planning.
Precinct Structure Plan (PSP)	A Precinct Structure Plan is a Victorian Planning Authority term for a long-term plan for urban development. It describes how the land is expected to be developed and how and where services and infrastructure are planned to support the development of new communities at a precinct scale.
Public open space	Is publicly owned and accessible land in which the primary purpose is recreation, leisure, and outdoor enjoyment. It includes parks, gardens, sport reserves, and natural areas.
Restricted open space	The primary purpose of restricted open space is for open space, however, there is limited access due to use. This might be a result of lease agreements (such as schools), specialised sporting infrastructure (such as elite facilities, golf courses, racecourses) or conservation protection.



Warrnambool Art Gallery

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Jubilee Park/ Wurrumbit Birrng Yaar



Mayor's Message

Warrnambool is home to amazing open spaces.

From Lady Bay to the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens and Lake Pertobe, these well-known places are key to the way in which residents see and enjoy our city. Our open spaces are where we spend time with family, friends, stay active, relax and connect with nature.

And they play a part in attracting more than 700,000 visitors to Warrnambool every year.

Warrnambool is home to 169 open spaces, including many smaller neighbourhood parks.

The Open Space Strategy looks at this entire network of local parks, reserves and green spaces across Warrnambool. Big or small, they all have a role to play in the health and wellbeing of our community and our natural environment.

They need to be cared for and protected.

The Strategy sets a clear direction as to how we will protect our valued natural areas, optimise the open space we already have and we can grow the network alongside new communities, all while keeping long-term maintenance and financial sustainability front of mind.

As we grow, it won't just be a question of how much open space we have, but whether it's in the right places, and how we can make the most of it.

In preparing the plan we received input from more than 100 people.

This feedback has helped shape the Strategy in a way that we believe will ensure that our treasured open spaces work for families, young people, older residents and everyone lucky enough to live in or visit Warrnambool.

Introduction and background

The City of Warrnambool is a prominent regional centre located along the south-west coast of Victoria. It is Victoria's largest coastal regional city beyond Port Phillip Bay. The city will experience moderate growth, from a population of 36,150 in 2024[2] to approximately 45,000 by 2046[3].

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide Council and the community with a clear direction and priority for open space planning and delivery until 2041.

Open space is essential infrastructure. A high quality, well connected network of open space provides health and wellbeing, environmental, and economic benefits to a community. Open space supports not only local residents but also those that work, study, and visit the city.

The city is supported by a significant amount of public open space as well as conservation land and the foreshore which provides access to a diverse range of experiences. As the city continues to grow over the next 15 years the capacity and useability of the existing open space assets, along with additional open space provided through the growth areas will need to be integrated into a high quality and financial sustainable network.

	Home to 36,150 residents		362ha of public open space		54% of open space over 0.2ha have 2 or more functions
	Increase to approximately 45,000 residents by 2046		Approximately 48.4ha of additional public open space by 2046		91.7m^2 of public open space per capita by 2046
	12.7km of Council managed coastline		700,000 visitors every year		72% of urban dwellings are within 400m of public open space



[2] ABS, 2025, Regional population
[3] SGS Economics and Planning, 2026, Warrnambool Futures
[4] Warrnambool City Council, 2026, Warrnambool Snapshot:



Strategic context

The Open Space Strategy sits within a broader strategic context, influenced by state and local directions, as well as informing design, funding, and maintenance requirements. The State Government has set high level guidance for the role of Warrnambool as well as open space planning, both of which have informed the development of this Strategy.

At a local level, the Community Vision for Warrnambool is to be "a thriving regional leader, rich in opportunities and committed to fostering a sustainable and inclusive lifestyle." This vision, along with long term asset management and financial capacity of Council has informed the scope of the Strategy. Furthermore, this Strategy sits alongside a range of other interconnected documents which provide direct guidance on active recreation, playgrounds, and greening the city.

The Open Space Strategy will directly provide guidance on how the open space network can deliver on the broader Council strategic direction and where specific focus and resourcing across the network should be directed over the next 15 years. This will further support the development and delivery of new master plans, prioritisation of funding, and maintenance standards.

Figure 1: Strategic context #

State Government					
Strategic Documents	Plans for Victoria	Open Space For Everyone 2021	Warrnambool Planning Scheme		
Guidelines	Guide for Open Space Strategy 2025	Precinct Structure Plan Guidelines : New Comunities in Victoria 2021			
Warrnambool City Council#					
Planning	Community Vision	Council Plan 2025-29	Asset Managenment Plan	Warrnambool Futures*	Healthy Warrnambool 2025-29
	Open Space Strategy 2026	Active Warrnambool 2025-35	Play Space Strategic Framework 2025	Green Warrnambool	Warrnambool Coastal Management Plan 2013
	Warrnambool Foreshore Strategic Framework Plan	Structure Plans			
Design	Master Plans	Concept Plans	Detailed landscape plans		
Funding	Annual and Long Term Budget	Open Space Contributions Policy			
Delivery & Maintenance	Maintenance Standards				

This is a list of the key documents that support the delivery of open space across the city. It is not an exhaustive list. There are many other documents that also have a role in providing guidance including in specifc locations or catchments. These have been considered in the development of the Open Space Strategy.
** Warrnambool Futures is underdevelopment. It will set the city-wide strategic land use plan and identify where and how future growth and development will take place. The Plan will identify key issues such as employment, tourism, housing supply, infrastructure provision and environmental challenges holistically and strategically.*

Benefits of open space

Open space is essential infrastructure. A well connected, accessible and high quality network of open space provides health and wellbeing, environmental and economic benefits for those who live, work, visit and recreate in the city.

Open space provides opportunities for people to be active, socialise, relax and spend time in nature. It builds connections across communities and encourages active lifestyles. Open space also provides a range of environmental benefits including supporting urban cooling, improving air quality, and providing a network of spaces for habitat protection and biodiversity. Furthermore, open space supports economic benefits through activating precincts and activity centres and providing spaces for events and tourism opportunities. It provides outdoor spaces for workers, improving employee wellbeing and productivity, and increases property values through increasing the amenity of local areas.

Figure 2: Benefits of open space

Benefits of open space		
Health and wellbeing	**Environment**	**Economic**
Physical Wellbeing	Improved air quality	Tourism and visitors
Mental wellbeing	Reduced emissions	Worker productivity
Cultural connection	Improvedd biodiversity	Property values
Social connection	Water management	Climate resilience
Volunteerism	Urban cooling	Urban amenity



Warrnambool Botanic Gardens

www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au

Challenges and opportunities

Open space is faced with both internal (Council) and external challenges that need to be considered when planning open space to support current and future community needs.

Challenges/ opportunities	Description
Multi-functional and integrated open space	Community needs are changing due to increased population, demographic shifts, lifestyles, and trends in sport and recreation. These changes are impacting how people want to access open space, types of sports, and participation levels. To cater for a variety of community needs, as well as increase utilisation of open space – including across seasons and different times of the day, each piece of open space should have multiple functions[5]. In addition, where possible, open space should be co-located or integrated with other community uses. This includes community infrastructure (including schools), employment precincts, and retail and civic precincts. Co-location and integration support in activating these precincts, as well as improving the utilisation of open space.
Tourism and events	Open space is a significant driver of economic activity for Warrnambool, particularly visitation to natural assets along the coastline and events utilising open space. While tourism and economic stimulus are a positive contribution, the attraction of tourism comes with a compounding demand for access and use of key open space locations. Strategies to better balance locational pressures of residents and tourists include specifically designed open space assets targeted to manage and accommodate tourism and event demands, improved active and public transport connections, and increased maintenance schedules during peak periods[6].
Climate change	Open space assets are being significantly impacted by climate change hazards and the increased frequency of major weather events. This is impacting open space in multiple ways, including through encroachment on existing open space, reducing short-term useability and long-term access, increasing maintenance requirements, and limiting suitable future open space locations due to coastal erosion, inundation or flooding. Responding to climate changes requires coordinated climate and adaptation planning for all foreshore and estuarine areas, and the need to improve the resilience of natural and built assets in open space. Climate events will disrupt users' access to open space. This includes disruption to play, extended sporting seasons, an increase in evening uses, an increase in alternative spaces such as indoor recreation, and loss and or damage to infrastructure.[7] With regards to climate change mitigation and preventative strategies, open spaces provide urban cooling and offer areas for people to seek refuge during periods of intense heat. It creates a buffer to urban development and in some cases serves as fire breaks or coastal storm surge and flood management to slow and retain floodwaters. Open space, including linear open space, also supports in retaining and strengthening the biodiversity of microorganisms, flora and fauna as well as building critical habitat corridors across landscapes to support movement and migration.
Financial and partnership opportunities	Local government plays a key role in the planning, delivering, funding, maintenance and servicing of open space. Ensuring that current and future open spaces are financially sustainable is critical. **Funding limitations:** Council generally has three mechanisms to fund open space: development contributions, state and federal government grants, and general revenue. For new open space, development contributions are a key funding source. Councils in Victoria have multiple options when levying contributions for the provision of municipal open space. When considering state and federal government grants, they are usually one-off grants for specific types of projects (e.g. pavilion upgrades, dog parks). General revenue is used to support a range of ongoing and one-off projects. Under the rate cap, the pool of available funds is stretched, with the key focus for capital works programs being asset renewal. Given this, any new infrastructure needs to consider the long-term capital and maintenance costs on Council and the community. **Privately owned, underutilised public spaces, and state or conservation land:** To mitigate financial costs and increase access to open space partnership opportunities can be considered. This can include underutilised public spaces such as partnerships with schools and education sectors such as Deakin University, as well as access to open space managed and operated by private landowners (such as golf courses, racecourses, plazas/malls). In addition, the city includes land managed by GORCAPA, Parks Victoria, DEECA and other entities which can provide opportunities for sharing of resources and shared planning. **Development as catalyst:** Alternative opportunities to increasing open space are through major infrastructure projects. Major developments can unlock capital funds (or in-kind contributions) as part of significant infrastructure projects such as major roads, rail development, and renewable energy projects. While these opportunities may not be frequent, they can support the integration and or funding of open space.

[5] Maria Korkou, Ari K.M. Tarigan, Hans Martin Hanslin, The multifunctionality concept in urban green infrastructure planning: A systematic literature review, Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, Volume 85, 2023, 127975, ISSN 1618-8667, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2023.127975.
[6] Change Sustainable Solutions (March 2015) Open Space Practices in High Density Areas.
[7] Cooney, E. (December 2024) How climate change is impacting community sport. La Trobe University.


Lake Pertobe

What we heard

Council engaged with the Warrnambool community to ensure local perspectives were considered and integrated into the Strategy.

We conducted a municipal wide online survey, held a number of face to face and online workshops, and met with specific community stakeholders to capture what the Warrnambool community values about open space. We asked the community:

- What types of open space people use, how often they use it, and how they travel there
- How the community views the quality, variety and accessibility of open space
- What could be improved or enhanced to increase community satisfaction.

Overall, the community felt that although the City of Warrnambool has a large amount of open space, some spaces are underutilised and are of low quality. Areas of high value to the community are Warrnambool's natural assets; particularly Warrnambool's various rivers, creeks, and coastal areas, the Botanic Gardens and Lake Pertobe. Areas for improvement spanned across 4 key themes:

Prioritise quality, diversity and design

- Better plan for open spaces in new developments, with designs, wayfinding and signage that recognise and align with Traditional Owner knowledge and history
- Plan for concentrated, connected larger green spaces as opposed to scattered, smaller spaces
- Consolidate the number of open space areas, by divesting low utilised /ill positioned areas to allow investment into others
- Increase maintenance of open spaces for high use areas, including the foreshore and the river/creeks.
- Simplify messaging and increase access to dogs off leashes areas
- Increase opportunities for informal recreation
- Increase the biodiversity connections to and along waterways through open space and green linkages

Increase accessibility, connectivity and walkability

- Connect footpaths and cycling networks to existing areas of open space
- Increase connections to and along waterways via safer, wider, high quality shared footpaths
- Increase accessibility for all abilities, ages, women, girls, and members of the culturally diverse community
- Increase safety of open space by increasing lighting, wayfinding, and improving line of sight.

Increase weather protected areas, seating and amenity

- Provide additional undercover areas and windbreaks around seating, picnic and playground areas
- Provide additional seating, toilets, drinking facilities and bins along high use areas

Increase tree canopy coverage in open spaces

- Increase the variety of species, and overall volume of tree planting across Warrnambool, prioritising local indigenous tree species in environmental areas such as waterways and open space adjoining land that is managed for environmental purposes.

Open Space Strategy

Vision: **The open space network protects and enhances the environmental values of Warrnambool while also providing spaces for the community to exercise, build social connection, access education, and relax. The future open space network will be planned and maintained to be adaptable to changing community and climate needs while also using financially sustainable approaches.**

Principles for open space planning

These principles will guide the planning, delivery, and maintenance of open space.

Open space principles	Description
Accessible	A variety of open spaces that are accessible and inclusive for all residents, regardless of age, ability and culture. Residents should have at least one open space within walking distance of their home.
Adaptable	Flexible, multi-use and provide opportunities for passive and active recreation that is responsive to community needs
Connected	Open space corridors and shared trails that improve the connectivity of the network and provide links for walking, cycling and biodiversity movement.
Efficient and sustainable	Consider adaptability and maintenance in the development and management of open space.
Diverse	Provide a variety of experiences and cater for a range of recreational needs.
Equitable	Access to open space will be distributed as fairly as possible across the municipality.
Protective of the environment	Preserve and enhance the biodiversity and environmental values across open space while providing appropriate public access to waterways and coastal environments.

Objectives and indicators

To achieve the open space vision, the Strategy is guided by 3 objectives. These objectives include indicators to measure the impact of change over the life of the Strategy.

Objectives	Indictors of success
Objective 1: To provide an equitable distribution and connection to open space across the city	95% of dwellings in urban areas are within a 400m walkable catchment of open space
Objective 2: To ensure all open space has a clear purpose and supported by multiple functions.	All open space has a clear function All open space greater than 0.2ha has a minimum of 2 functions
Objective 3: To provide a financially sustainable, adaptable and resilient open space network that can support future generations	30% tree canopy cover across the open space network


Stingray Bay

Types of open space

Definition of open space

Public open space space is publicly owned and accessible land in which the primary purpose is recreation, leisure, and outdoor enjoyment. It includes parks, gardens, sport reserves, and natural areas. It is protected for open space uses by the zoning Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ). Public open space is the focus for this Strategy.

Restricted open space the primary purpose of restricted open space is for open space, however, there is limited access due to use. This might be a result of lease agreements (such as schools), specialised sporting infrastructure (such as elite facilities, golf courses, racecourses) or conservation protection (such as the coastline).

Encumbered land is land in which the primary purpose is not open space; however, it may provide some supplementary access. However, this is not always granted or available. Generally, the primary purposes for this land are transport, drainage, and utilities.

Given the limitations on restricted open space and encumbered land, this land should not be included in the core open space network. It can, however, support the open space network by providing greater access to green spaces.

Open space services standards

Open space service standards ensure the City plans for a sufficient and diverse supply of land into the future. Open space should be provided across a network of spaces with smaller land parcels providing local parks for surrounding residents and larger land parcels serving a broader catchment across the municipality. Service standards include hierarchy, accessibility, and functions.

Hierarchy of open space

Open space is categorised into 5 hierarchies: regional, district, neighbourhood, local and pocket. The hierarchy is determined by the size of the open space land only. It can however inform the role, experience, and duration of stay that users can expect. The open space network should include a variety of hierarchies to support different uses and experiences.

Hierarchy of open space	Size
Regional open space is a municipal destination. Infrastructure provided in regional spaces support longer stay times and typically accommodate substantial infrastructure and facilities that can cater to a large number of people. These spaces cater to users from across Warrnambool and, for some, the wider region. Examples include Lake Pertobe Recreation Reserve, Albert Park Reserve and Victoria Park.	15ha+
District open space is a destination that services a precinct. They can accommodate different activities and different user groups simultaneously. They are large enough to accommodate formalised sporting functions such as courts and playing fields; however, to include formalised sport, they must be at least 8ha in size. Infrastructure provided on district spaces supports longer stay times. Examples include Botanic Gardens, Brierly Recreation Reserve, Allansford Recreation Reserve, and Dennington Recreation Reserve.	5-15ha
Neighbourhood open space is large enough to accommodate multiple open space functions. In rural settings they may include formalised sports uses (e.g. 1 oval), however they need to be a minimum of 5ha. They are intended to service a catchment of surrounding suburbs for a medium length of stay. Examples include D.W. Jones Oval Reserve, A.H Davidson Oval, Manuka Dr Reserve, and Bushfield Recreation Reserve.	1-5ha
Local open space is intended as walkable locations for immediate residents. They can provide a range of passive open space functions, however, only for short stays. Examples include Witham Park Reserve, Toohey Estate Reserve, Motang Drive Reserve, and Water Tower Reserve.	0.2-1ha
Pocket parks are very small parcels of open space which can contribute to improving amenity and providing 'pockets' of green relief. Due to their size, they have limited functions and therefore require limited infrastructure. Pocket parks should not be prioritised as new open space due to the limitations on their use, rather they should only be delivered to fill accessibility gaps or increase greening in urban areas. Examples include Iona Avenue Reserve, Boronia Court, Mechanics Institute Park and Shrader Park.	0.2ha and under

Accessibility

Accessibility standards aim to ensure everyone has equitable access to open space, as well as access to a diverse range of open space (local, district and regional). In urban areas, 95% of dwellings should be within 400m of open space.

Higher order open spaces (district and regional) are destination spaces. This means that generally people will drive to access this open space. Across the whole LGA, 95% of dwellings should be within a 10min of district and 20min drive of regional open space.

In areas where there are accessibility gaps, restricted open space and encumbered land can support in addressing gaps, however as noted in Types of Open Space, there are limitations on this land.

Accessibility standards
95% of urban dwellings within 400m walking catchment of public open space
95% of dwellings within 10mins drive of district open space
95% of dwellings within 20min drive of regional open space

Quantity

Quantity refers to the amount of open space available. The benchmark of 30m^2 per capita has been broadly adopted by industry in open space planning[8]. This benchmark is applied to the entire Local Government Area. It recognises that open spaces across the city work together as a network, and people often travel to enjoy a variety of spaces.

This quantity benchmark differs from that applied in Precinct Structure Plans which notes that the open space network should provide a minimum of 10% of the Net Developable Area (NDA) for local parks and sports fields in residential areas (including activity centres) and 2% of the NDA in employment and/or economic activity areas.

Standard	Description
Quantity	30m2 per capita across the LGA

Diversity

Diversity refers both to the mix of existing functions across the open space network and the diversity of the open space hierarchy. The more diverse the hierarchy the more opportunity for a wider range of open space functions and experiences. In addition, when open space includes multiple functions, it supports the needs for a wider range of users as well as increases the utilisation of open space.

To support in increasing diversity across the open space network the diversity standard is that 2 or more open space functions[9] should be included on land over 0.2ha (local open space and above).

Standard	Description
Diversity	95% of open space land that is over 0.2ha (local open space and above) should have 2 or more functions

[8]SGS Economics and Planning (2024) Public Open Space Contributions in Victoria: A preferred approach

[9] See open space functions in following standard

Functions

Functions on open space refers to the purposes and activities for which the land is developed and managed. To meet the diverse needs of the community multi-functional spaces (more than one function) should be provided on all local open space and higher order open space. The allocation of functions also ensures that the role of the open space is clear along with the supporting infrastructure required (see Appendix 2 for supporting infrastructure).

Functions	Description
Sport	Spaces that provide organised sport. It can include playing fields or pitches for competitive sports or physical skill development and training. The space is typically available for informal and public use when organised sporting events or training are not programmed. Sport functions should only be provided on Neighbourhood (if 5ha), District, and Regional level open space to ensure there is enough space for supporting infrastructure.
Civic	Squares or plazas that are a mix of hard and green infrastructure areas usually located within an activity centre and or next to community infrastructure. Civic functions should only be provided on Neighbourhood, District, and Regional level open space to ensure there is enough space for supporting infrastructure. At times they can be provided on local open space.
Nature	Nature functions provide access to natural landscapes, characterised by semi-natural and natural vegetation or bushland. They can provide low-impact recreation, such as trails and tracks, along with buffers between land use zones. They contribute to improving and supporting biodiversity and tree canopy. This function differs from conservation land, which is specifically zoned for conservation purposes and classified as restricted open space. This function can be provided on any size open space.
Linkage	Linear open space provides connections, linkages or movement corridors for pedestrians and cyclists. If a standalone piece of open space (primary function) they can also provide nature functions and biodiversity linkages (see nature function). Linkages can be provided on any size open space. They can also be provided in restricted and encumbered open space.
Events	Event functions on open space are areas designed to cater to formal events and community gatherings requiring public and commercial bookings. Event functions should only be provided on Neighbourhood, District, and Regional level open space to ensure there is enough space for supporting infrastructure.
Play	Play spaces provide formal play opportunities for children and young people. They can include a range of different experiences such as nature play, water play, and traditional play. Also includes scoot, skate and BMX infrastructure. Play functions should only be provided on Neighbourhood, District, and Regional level open space to ensure there is enough space for supporting infrastructure. In areas with limited access, at times they can be provided on Local open space.
Social	Space for social, community gathering, informal exercise such as half courts, exercise stations and other infrastructure to enable community spend time and connect with others. Social functions should only be provided on Local, Neighbourhood, District, and Regional level open space to ensure there is enough space for supporting infrastructure. At times they can be provided on pocket open space however with limited supporting infrastructure e.g. seating.
Story, art and education	Integration of art and landmarks to promote connection, conversation, education and teaching. This function can be provided on any size open space.
Vistas	Provides vantage points preserving significant sightlines and vistas. This function can be provided on any size open space. This function can be provided on any size open space.
Dog walking	Intentional dog walking zones, including on and off lead areas. This function can be provided on any size open space, however integration and conflict with other uses and functions needs to be considered.

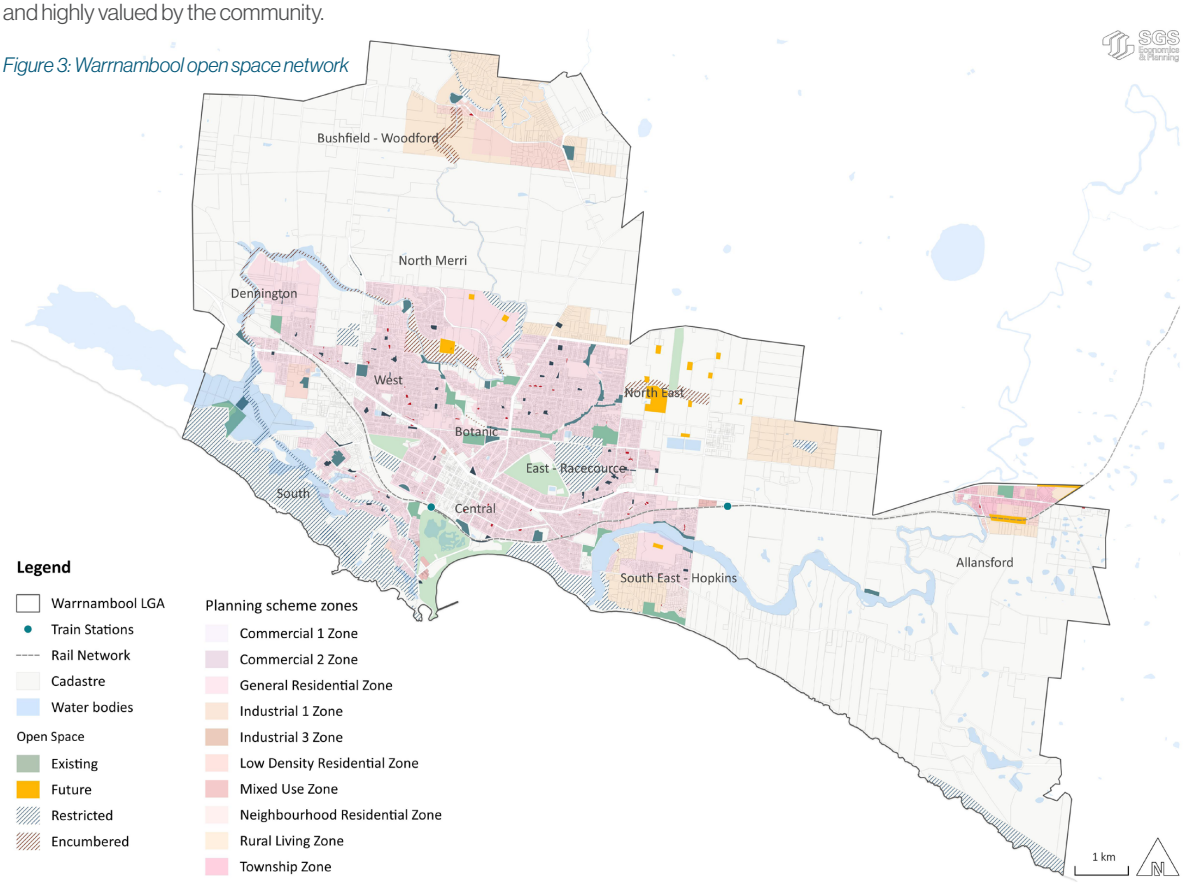
Warrnambool open space network

The City of Warrnambool comprises of 11 open space Precincts. Theses Precincts support local area planning for open space.

Across the city there are 362ha of open space across 169 individual parcels, along with significant portions of restricted conservation land, largely along coast and rivers. The majority of open space is located within the central and southern areas of Warrnambool, particularly within the East- Racecourse (33 parcels), South East- Hopkins (27 parcels) and South precincts (20 parcels).

Open space also plays a key linking role across the city with the Russell Creek, Merri River and Hopkins River trails being well utilised and highly valued by the community.

Figure 3: Warrnambool open space network



Quantity

The city currently has a high quantity of public open space which supports those who live, work, visit, and recreate in the city. Across the city there are several strategic growth areas such as North Dennington, Hopkin Hights, East of Aberline and North of the Merri.

In addition to the current open space network, Council has noted that approximately 48.4ha of open space will be added to the network. Based on current and forecast population as well as the existing and proposed open space, while the quantity of open space per person will decrease, based on service standards the city has an adequate amount of public open space. To ensure equitable access to existing and new open space, accessibility and diversity of the open space will be important.

		2024	2046
Quantity of public open space LGA Target: 30m² per capita	Population	36,150	45,000
	Open space (ha)	362ha	410.4ha*10
	Per capita	**100m²**	**91.7m²**

Accessibility

Open space should be located within 400m of 95% of all urban residential dwellings. Based on accessibility across the municipality, approximately 72% of dwellings are within a 400m walking distance from open space.

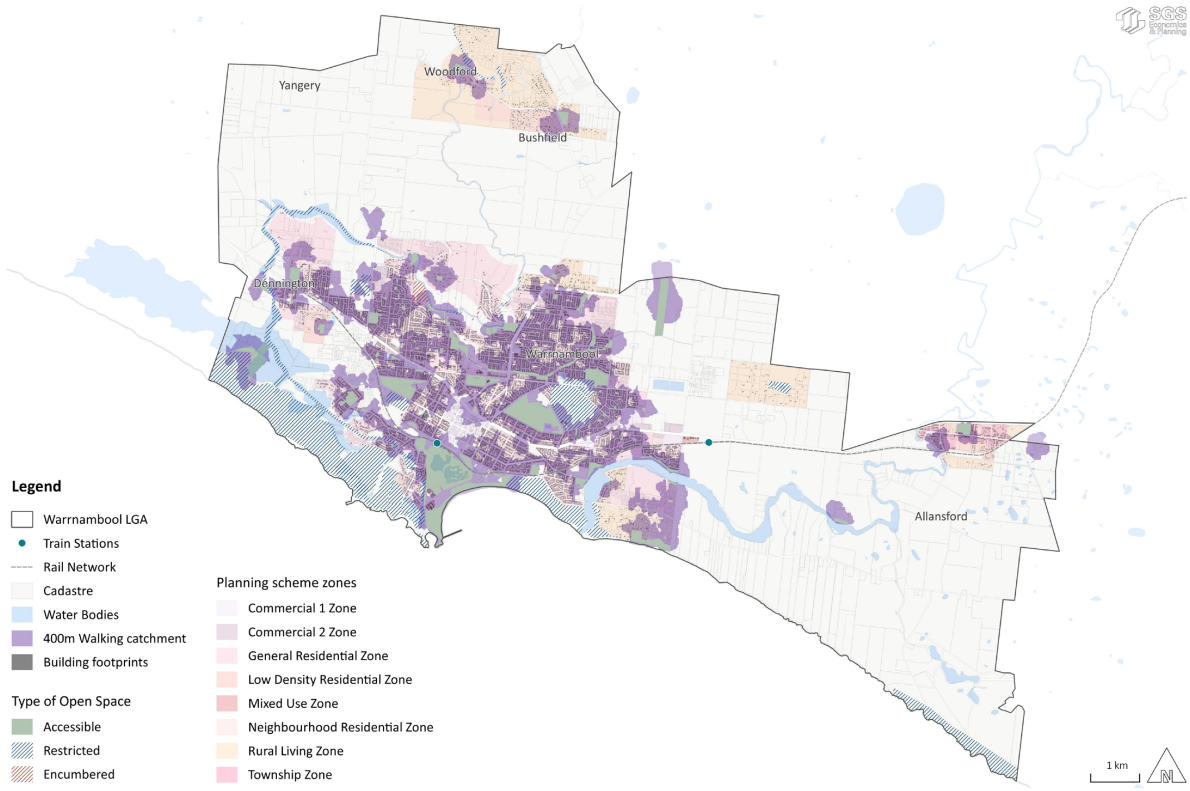
Urban precincts with the lowest level of accessibility include North Merri (25%) and South East – Hopkins (57%). These are both growth areas which will see improved access as new open space and linkage connections are created.

Encumbered and restricted open space, while this land might not always be available, it can provide surrounding residents with some access to green space. Across this city, there is a total of 16.3ha of encumbered land and 739.19ha of restricted land. This is largely located along the foreshore and river networks.

When applying the accessibility standards of a 10-minute drive to a district open space and a 20-minute drive to a regional open space, all residential areas are within access to district and regional spaces.

Accessibility of public open space LGA Target: 95% of urban dwellings	400m to open space	72%
	10mins drive to district open space	100%
	20mins drive to regional open space	100%

Figure 4: 400m walking distance from public open space



Diversity

Across the city there are 12 regional parks, 16 district parks, 29 neighbourhood parks and 51 local parks. There are a further 61 pocket parks (36% of all parks).

Hierarchy	Number
Regional	12
District	16
Neighbourhood	29
Local	51
Pocket	61
Total	**169**

These parks provide a range of different functions, with most supporting social, play, linkage, and sport. Of the spaces that are over 0.2ha, only 54% provided two or more functions. To ensure open space has a clear purpose and can meet the needs of a wider user group, all open space over 0.2ha should be multifunctional.

Diversity 95% of open space land that is over 0.2ha (local open space and above) should have 2 or more functions	Number of spaces over 0.2ha	108
	Number of spaces over 0.2ha with two or more functions	58
	% of spaces over 0.2ha two or more functions	54%

Overall, at the LGA level, the total amount of open space **meets the provision standard of 30sqm per capita**. The distribution of this open space, however, does not ensure equal access for all residents, with many outside the 400m accessibility standard. The city includes a range of different types of open space with varying functions. In some areas, the open space is under-embellished with a lack of clarity on the purpose of the open space.



Improving the open space network

Improving the open space network so it can continue to meet the needs of the community today, as well as our future community can be achieved through three directions: protect, optimise, and grow.

Protect: Preserving open space for its intended use. This can include ensuring land is appropriately zoned, balancing any commercialisation of uses on open space with free access, protecting biodiversity, and maintaining and renewing open space that is supporting the broader network.	**Optimise:** Ensuring the open space network delivers maximum community benefit. This can include ensuring the role of each parcel of open space is clear and includes multiple functions, open space that is not able to meet current and future needs is repurposed for alternative uses, and accessibility gaps across the network are minimised.	**Grow:** Strategic expansion of the open space network to address identified gaps. This can include unlocking land to improve community access, utilising restricted and encumbered land, acquiring new land to service growth communities, and redeveloping and improving the service standards of ageing infrastructure.

The following section provides a summary of open space for each of Warrnambool's 11 Precincts. Each Precinct provides a summary of the current state of open space and in considering the current and future community needs, feedback from community, and principles of open space, opportunities to improve the open space network have been identified based on the three directions: protect, optimise, and grow.




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Precinct summaries
www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au

Precinct 1: Central



The Central precinct includes the Central Business District and a variety of open spaces, featuring pocket parks, local parks, neighbourhood parks, district parks, and regional parks. The regional open space, Lake Pertobe Reserve and the Foreshore Reserve are key locations for residents and tourists. Within the CBD itself Civic Green provides open space to relax, socialise with others, and hold civic events

Opportunities to improve open space include:

Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs.

Optimise: Review the purpose and functions of Cannon Hill Reserve as a significant open space asset for Warrnambool.

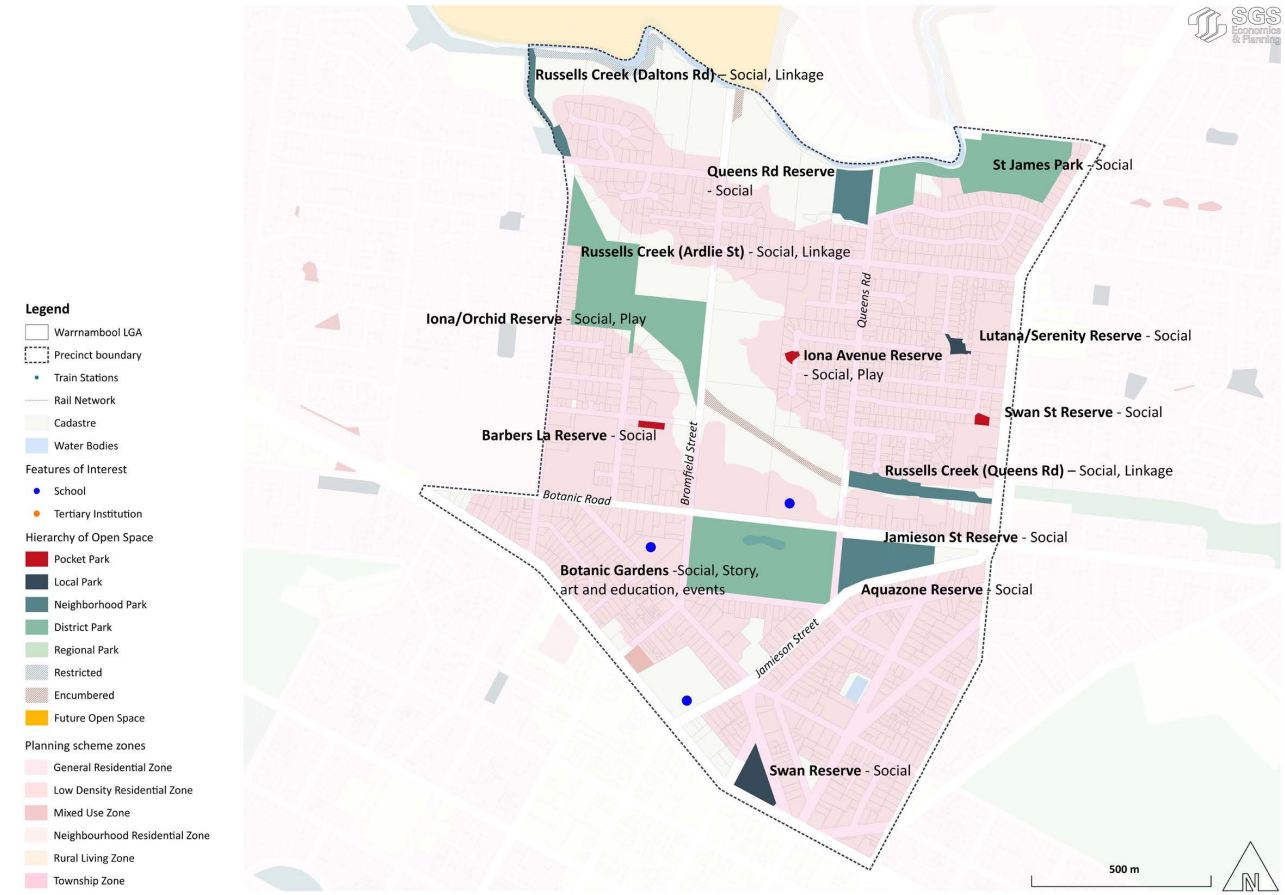
Grow: Explore opportunities to further connect Fletcher Jones Reserve with the Fletcher Jones Gardens.

Grow: Improve green linkages across the CBD and into Lake Pertobe Recreation Reserve and the Foreshore Reserve.

Population (2024)	3,914
Total open space	86.7ha
Quantity	221.5m^2 per capita
Accessibility	68% of dwellings are within a 400m walking catchment to open space
Diversity	50% of open space more than 0.2ha includes more than 2 functions, which is below the LGA level of 58%

Assessment colours: Green: *meets or exceeds service standard,* **Orange:** *20% lower than service standard,* **Pink:** *more than 20% less than service standard*

Precinct 2: Botanic



The Botanic precinct features a variety of open space, including the Botanic Gardens which is a drawcard to residents and visitors alike, and the Russell Creek and Merri River which provide key connection links across the city as well as important ecological corridors. The precinct has a mix of social, sport, play, conservation and linkages spaces.

Opportunities to improve open space in this precinct include:

Optimise: Review and minimise narrow path locations along Russell Creek that have a high level of activity.

Optimise: Review the accessibility of Botanic Park path network to ensure it is inclusive for all ages and abilities.

Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs.

Optimise: Review opportunities to improve the quality of open space along the Merri River.

Protect: Explore opportunities to create wetlands and improve biodiversity in strategic areas such as Russell Creek and St James Park.

Population (2024)	2,705
Total open space	28.9ha
Quantity	106.7m^2 per capita
Accessibility	68% of dwellings are within a 400m walking catchment to open space
Diversity	40% of open space more than 0.2ha includes more than 2 functions, which is bleow the LGA level of 54%

Assessment colours: Green: *meets or exceeds service standard,* **Orange:** *20% lower than service standard,* **Pink:** *more than 20% less than service standard*

Precinct 3: East- Racecourse



The East Racecourse precinct includes a variety of open space including the major sporting reserve, Albert Park, and the linkage connection via Russell Creek. Additionally, the precinct features the racecourse, which is restricted open space.

The majority of the remaining open spaces within the precinct are local or pocket parks which provide social, play or linkage functions.

Due to the high level of local open space and pocket parks, this precinct is well connected when it comes to access to open spaces.

Opportunities to improve open space in this precinct include:

Protect: Protect and improve the quality of nature functions at Albert Park Reserve in alignment with the Albert Park Revegetation Plan 2022.

Grow: Explore partnership opportunities to increase community access to open space available at the Racecourse.

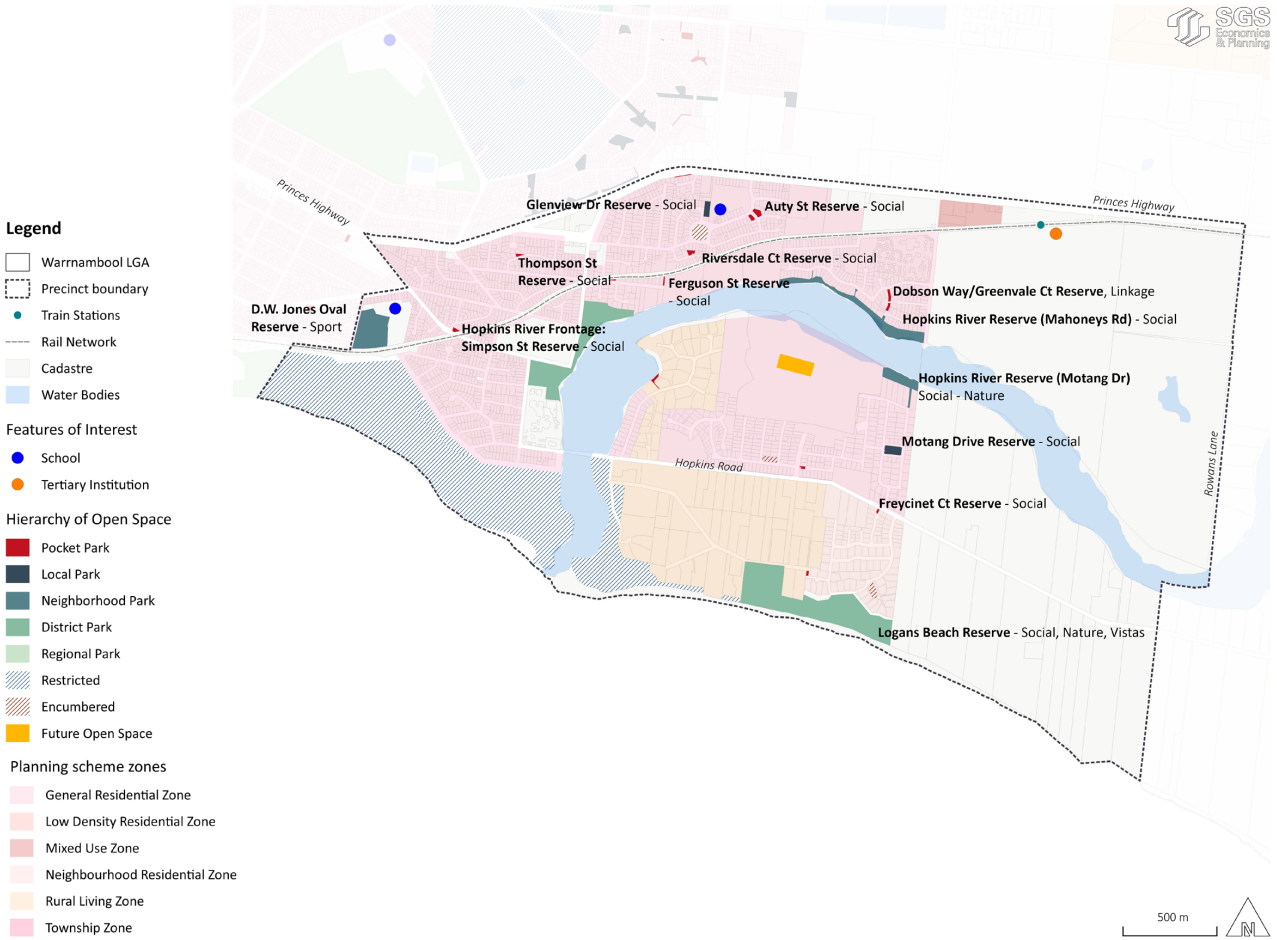
Grow: Improve connections between Brierly Recreational Reserve, Albert Park Reserve, and Russells Creek.

Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs.

Population (2024)	6,198
Total open space	57.8 ha
Quantity	93.3m^2 per capita
Accessibility	82% of dwellings are within a 400m walking catchment to open space
Diversity	77% of open space more than 0.2ha includes more than 2 functions, which is above the LGA level of 54%

Assessment colours: Green: *meets or exceeds service standard,* **Orange:** *20% lower than service standard,* **Pink:** *more than 20% less than service standard*

Precinct 4: South East- Hopkins



The South East – Hopkins precinct includes the key features of the Hopkins River, the tourist destination whale viewing area at Logan's Beach Reserve, and the conservation land along the foreshore. While access to public open space is poor in this precinct, the conservation land which include a range of walking trails, provides additional access to green space.
The precinct has a number of important spaces along the Hopkins River. This river is subject to flooding therefore any infrastructure located on this land needs to be able to adapt.

There is significant growth occurring in Hopkins Heights where new open space is planned. Majority of these spaces include the functions of social and or play.
There are limited sports functions, with DW Jones Oval Reserve shared with Warrnambool East Primary School, the only location. In addition, key access barriers are the railway line and movement along and across the Hopkins River.
Opportunities to improve open space in this precinct include:

Grow: Improve linkages along the Hopkins River and or the railway line towards Deakin University.

Grow: Provide additional open space through the Hopkins Heights development.

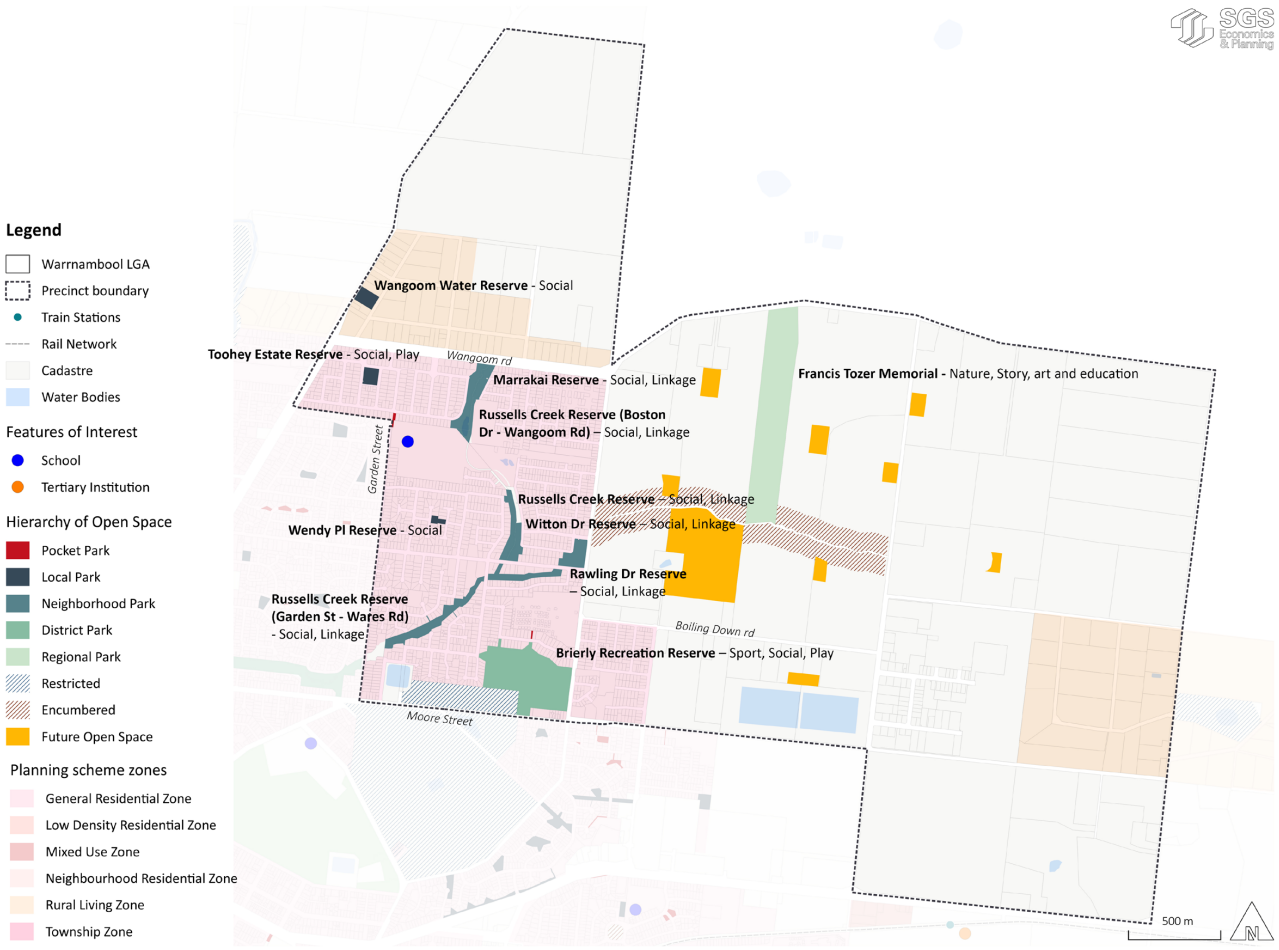
Optimise: Review the functions and flood constraints on Scoborio Reserve and EJ King Park and consider if a Master Plan or a Precinct Plan is required to support future improvement opportunities.

Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs.

Population (2024)	4,299
Total open space	28ha
Quantity	65.1m^2 per capita
Accessibility	57% of dwellings are within a 400m walking catchment to open space
Diversity	46.2% of open space more than 0.2ha includes more than 2 functions, which is low than the LGA level of 54%

Assessment colours: Green: *meets or exceeds service standard,* **Orange:** *20% lower than service standard,* **Pink:** *more than 20% less than service standard*

Precinct 5: North East



The North East precinct will experience significant growth through the implementation of the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan. In doing so, it will also gain new open spaces as well as linkages across the precinct.

Beyond this development the precinct includes a variety of open spaces such as Brierly Reserve which abuts the Racecourse, the Russells Creek trail, and the Francis Tozer Memorial Reserve, which hold significant environmental and cultural values.
A pedestrian connection is currently being built between the Marrakai Reserve and the Russells Creek Reserve on Whites Rd and Sharp Ave, extending the ecological corridor and linkage functions.

Opportunities to improve open space in this precinct include:
Protect: Through the delivery of the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan, protect Francis Tozer Memorial through a rezoning from farming land to conservation land and the consideration of appropriate buffers.

Grow: Provide additional open space through the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan.

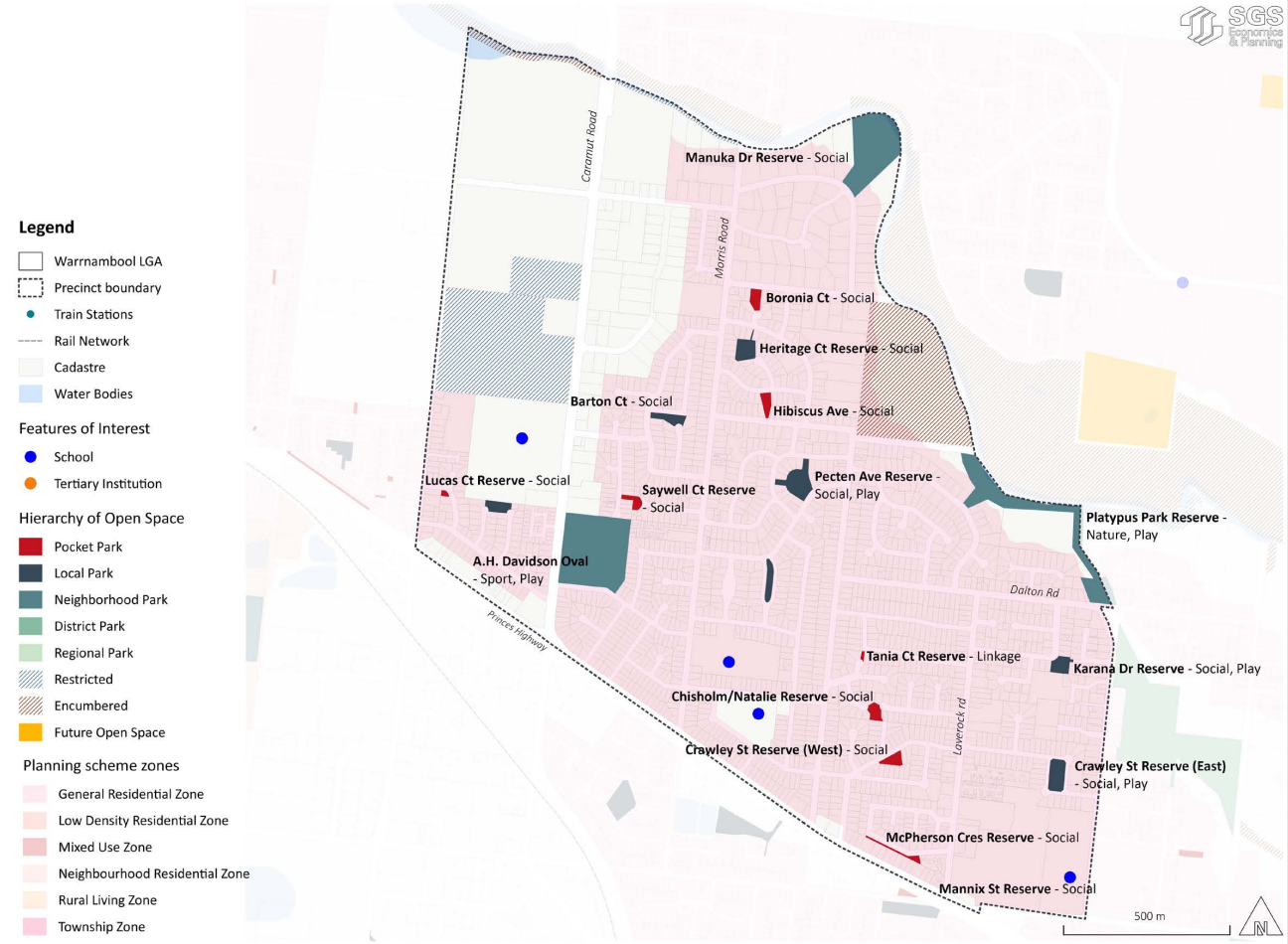
Grow: Investigate opportunities to improve pedestrian linkages between existing open spaces and new planned open spaces.

Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs.

Population (2024)	4,785
Total open space	45.4ha
Quantity	94.9m^2 per capita
Accessibility	80% of dwellings are within a 400m walking catchment to open space
Diversity	83% of open space more than 0.2ha includes more than 2 functions, which is above the LGA level of 54%

Assessment colours: Green: *meets or exceeds service standard,* **Orange:** *20% lower than service standard,* **Pink:** *more than 20% less than service standard*

Precinct 6: West



The West precinct includes a variety of open spaces, many of which are along the Merri River providing access to water and vistas. There are several parks throughout the precinct, however most are pocket or local parks. The Brauerander Park, the largest site in the precinct, is a premium athletes track and has restricted public access. In addition, Pecten Ave Reserve is a key site which is co-located with West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House.

The quantity of open space in this precinct is below 30m^2 per capita which means that some people may be travelling out of the precinct to access additional open space. Woodend Road Reserve, a large encumbered parcel of open space that is subject to flooding, is able to provide some additional access, however limited in its current state.

Due to the number of small parks, the precinct has good accessibility with localised gaps in the north, west and south.

Opportunities to improve open space in this precinct include:

Optimise: Improve the quality of open space along Merri River, in alignment with the South of the Merri Open Space Precinct Plan. This includes the Woodend Road Reserve, Manuka Dr Reserve, and Platypus Park Reserve.

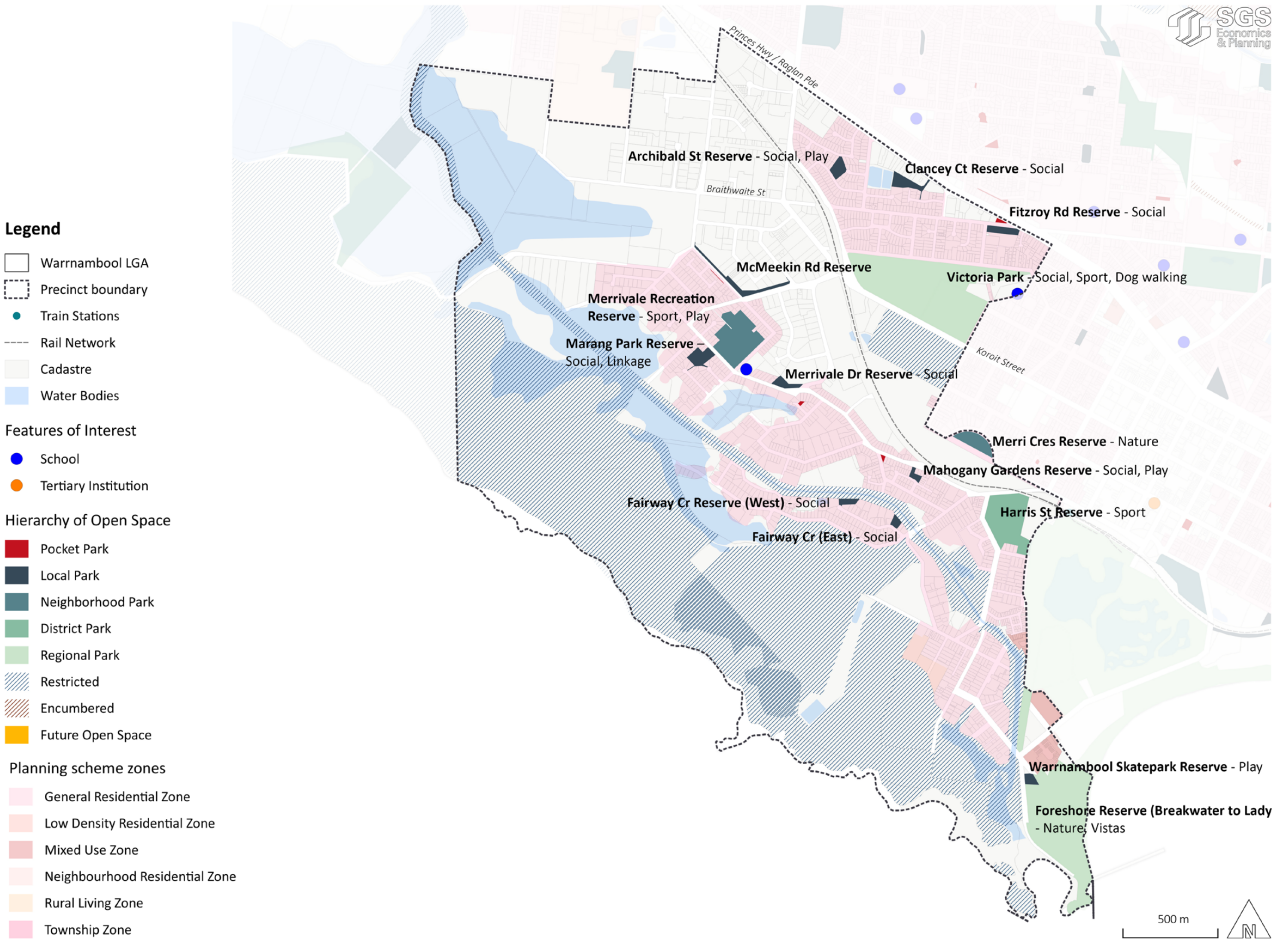
Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs.

Grow: Explore opportunities to provide new open space through the redevelopment of the saleyards.

Population (2024)	4,959
Total open space	13.2ha
Quantity	26.7m^2 per capita
Accessibility	74% of dwellings are within a 400m walking catchment to open space
Diversity	55% of open space more than 0.2ha includes more than 2 functions, which is above the LGA level of 54%

Assessment colours: Green: *meets or exceeds service standard,* **Orange:** *20% lower than service standard,* **Pink:** *more than 20% less than service standard*

Precinct 7: South



The South precinct includes significant conservation land along the foreshore and along the Merri River as well as key open spaces for the city including Victoria Park and the Warrnambool Skatepark Reserve. Victoria Park supports a range of open space functions as well as biodiversity connections. South of Victoria Park is the Showgrounds, which is restricted, however provides a key space for events. Warrnambool Skatepark Reserve provides a youth friendly space as well as connections to the foreshore trail.

The foreshore conservation land includes a range of walking trails as well as the tourist destination of Thunder Point Coastal Reserve. In addition, this location includes a golf course and former harness racing track. This precinct also includes the start of the Warrnambool to Port Fairy Rail Trail. While restricted open space due to flooding, it provides many of the residents in this precinct access to open space and walking trails.

Opportunities to improve open space in this precinct include:

Protect: Ensure conservation land is protected through enhancing biodiversity and strategically placed and maintained walking, education, and cultural infrastructure.

Grow: Explore opportunities to increase open space and green infrastructure in the West Warrnambool industrial estate.

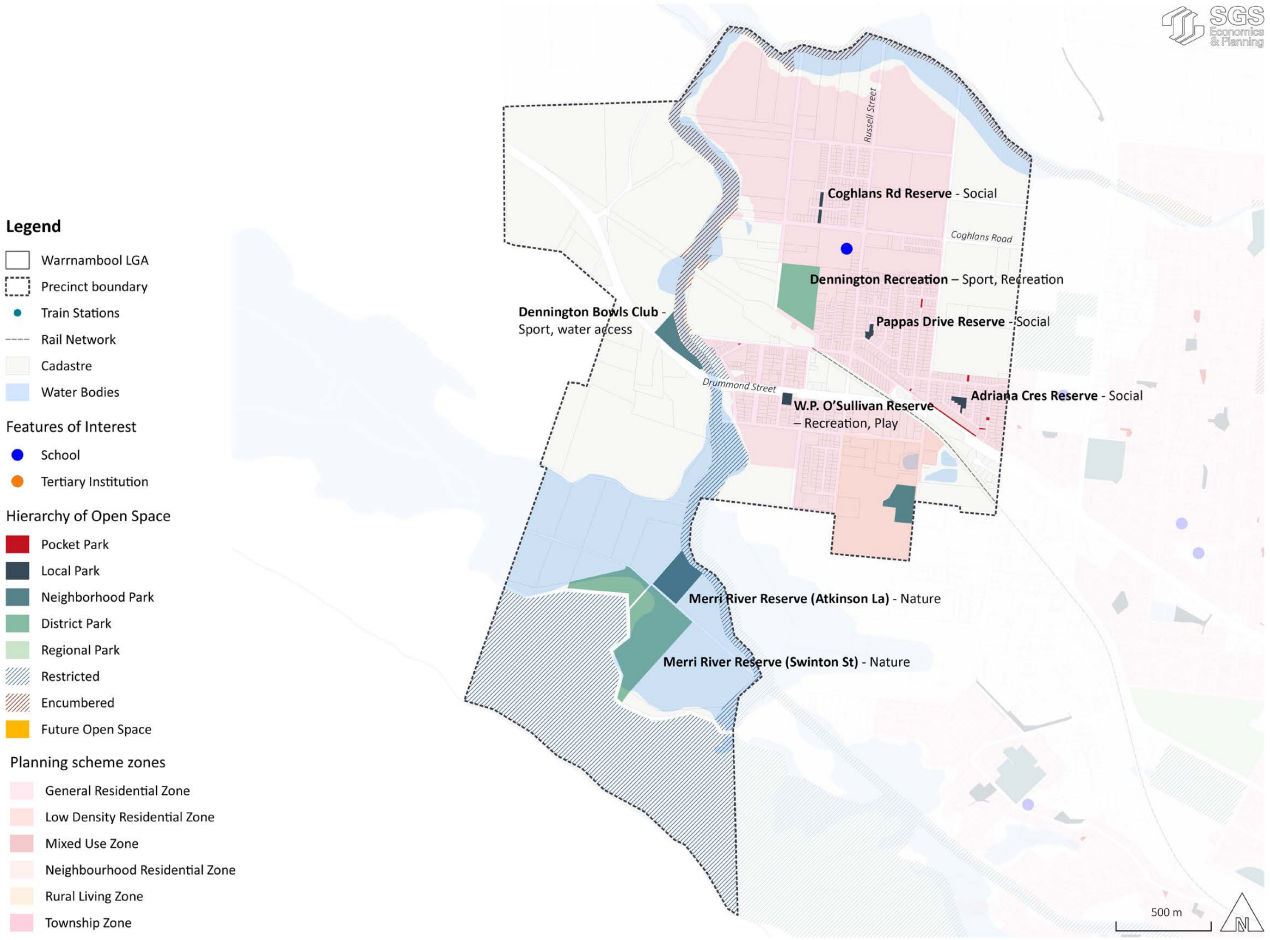
Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs.

Optimise: Review the long term use of Merri Cresent Reserve.

Population (2024)	3,502
Total open space	57.5ha
Quantity	164.3m^2 per capita
Accessibility	76% of dwellings are within a 400m walking catchment to open space
Diversity	30% of open space more than 0.2ha includes more than 2 functions, which is below the LGA level of 54%

Assessment colours: Green: *meets or exceeds service standard,* **Orange:** *20% lower than service standard,* **Pink:** *more than 20% less than service standard*

Precinct 8: Dennington



The Dennington precinct includes the Merri River which runs through the precinct intersecting with the Merri Reserve, Dennington Bowls club, kayak club, rowing club, and GG Payne Reserve. Open space infrastructure located around the river will at times be subject to flooding which can limit the level of embellishment.
The other key open space in the precinct is Dennington Reserve which provides a key sporting function. All other open space in the precinct are small parcels with limited functions.
The north of the precinct includes a key growth area. Currently, this area has limited open space except for linkages along the river. As per the North Dennington Development Plan these linkages will be enhanced and extend into the urban area through a series of roads with widened verges and key landscaped links and the encumbered land along the river improved, however no additional parcels of public open space will be provided.

Opportunities to improve open space in this precinct include:

Grow: Deliver new open space linkages as per the North Dennington Development Plan 2015 and integrate open space functions in encumbered land where appropriate.

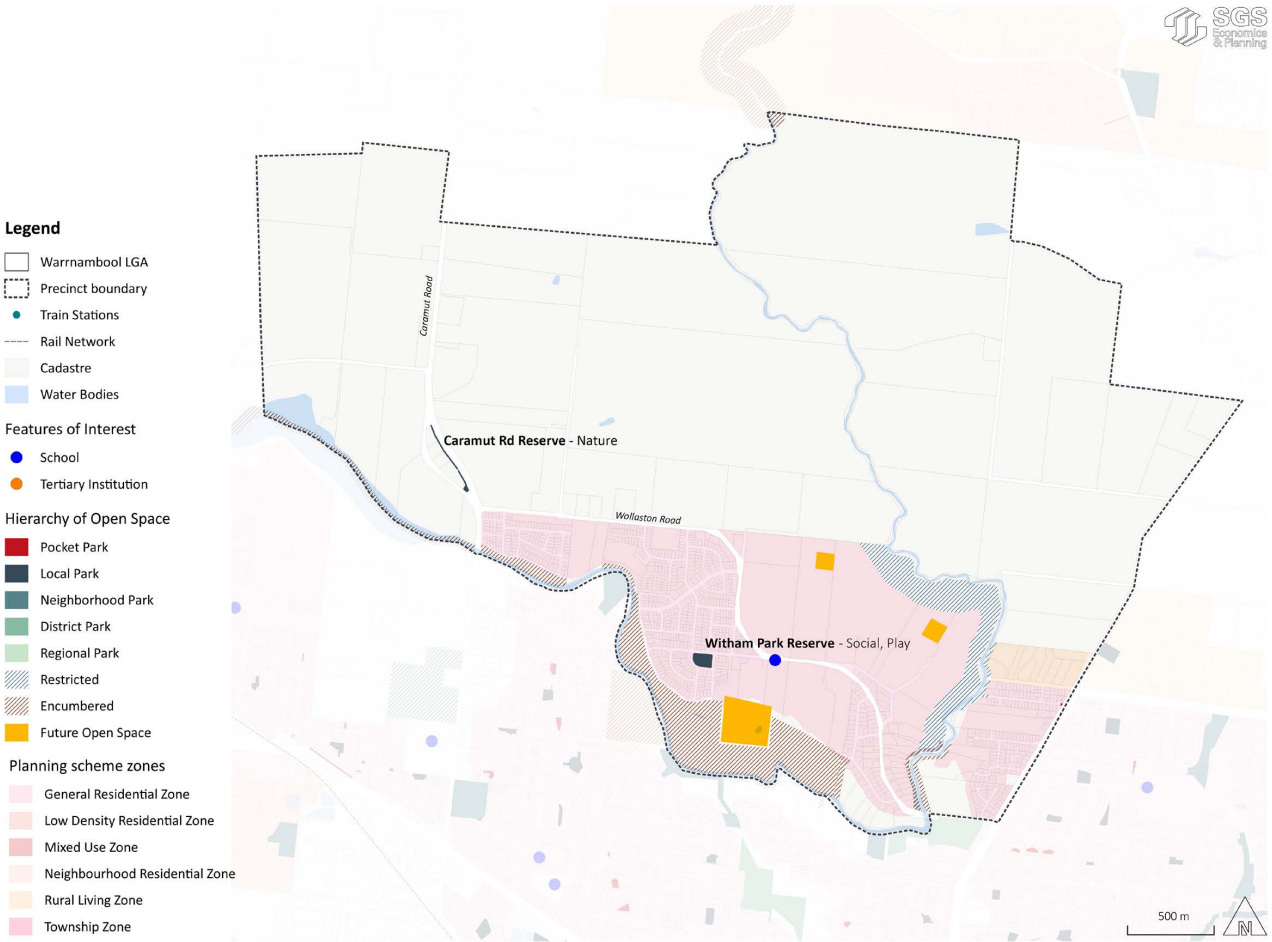
Optimise: Review the quality and capacity of Dennington Reserve to ensure the sporting functions can meet future participation demands.

Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs.

Population (2024)	2,134
Total open space	27.5ha
Quantity	129.0m^2 per capita
Accessibility	70% of dwellings are within a 400m walking catchment to open space
Diversity	22% of open space more than 0.2ha includes more than 2 functions, which is below the LGA level of 58%

Assessment colours: Green: *meets or exceeds service standard,* **Orange:** *20% lower than service standard,* **Pink:** *more than 20% less than service standard*

Precinct 9: North Merri



The North Merri precinct will experience significant growth through the delivery of the North of the Merri Structure Plan. Currently the precinct has limited access to public open space however there are several parks planned as growth occurs.

This precinct also connects to the Merri River to the south and east, which includes conservation land as well as land that is subject to flooding.

The Merri of the Merri Structure Plan notes that there will be additional open space located within the residential areas as well as a larger parcel of land which will include active recreation. The active recreation reserve will be located in land subject to flooding therefore infrastructure will need to be carefully considered.

South of the Merri includes key open space, however there are limited connection points for residents to access this land. The North of the Merri Structure Plan notes the delivery of 4 bridges to improve this access.

Opportunities to improve open space in this precinct include:

Grow: Deliver new open space and bridge connection points as per the North of the Merri Structure Plan.

Grow: Investigate opportunities to create a linkage along the Merri River from this Precinct to Woodford.

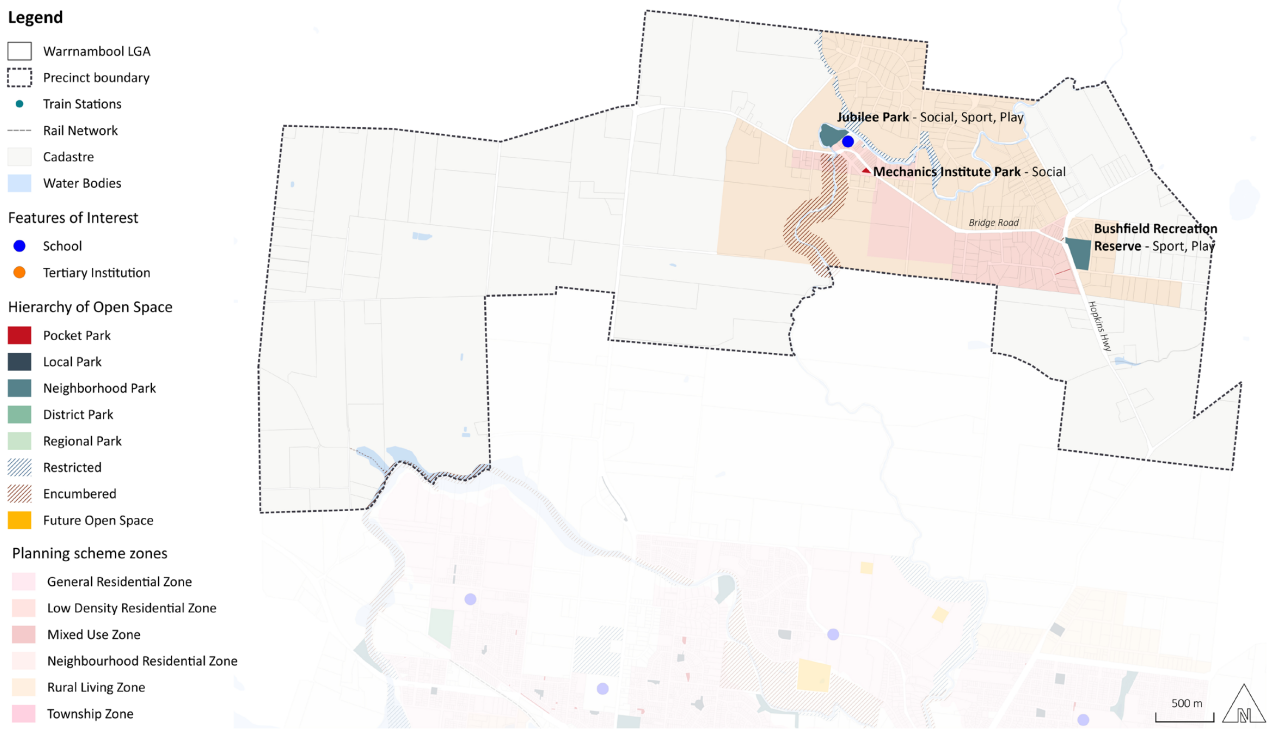
Protect: As the area is developed south of Grange Road, ensure an adequate biodiversity and open space buffer is provided to complete the link between Grange Road and Wollaston Road along the Merri River.

Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs.

Population (2024)	1,378
Total open space	1.2ha
Quantity	8.9m^2 per capita
Accessibility	25% of dwellings are within a 400m walking catchment to open space
Diversity	50% of open space more than 0.2ha includes more than 2 functions, which is below the LGA level of 54%

Assessment colours: Green: *meets or exceeds service standard,* **Orange:** *20% lower than service standard,* **Pink:** *more than 20% less than service standard*

Precinct 10: Bushfield – Woodford



The Bushfield-Woodford precinct is north of central Warrnambool with rural living and low density residential zones and no active transport connections into Warrnambool.

The precinct includes Jubilee Park which has a key function of play and social, Bushfield Recreation Reserve with the key function of sport, and the Mechanics Institute Park which provides a social function.

The Merri River also connects through this precinct. To the north of the river, a walking trail and pedestrian bridge connect Jubilee Park and Jellie Reserve (conservation land). However, there is limited access to the Merri River south of Jubilee Park.

There is low accessibility to open space in this precinct. This is largely due to the low density residential areas, however there is also limited safe active transport connections along Bridge Road.

Opportunities to improve open space in this precinct include:

Grow: Provide safe connections along and across Bridge Road and the Hopkins Highway to increase access to Bushfield Recreation Reserve and Jubilee Park.

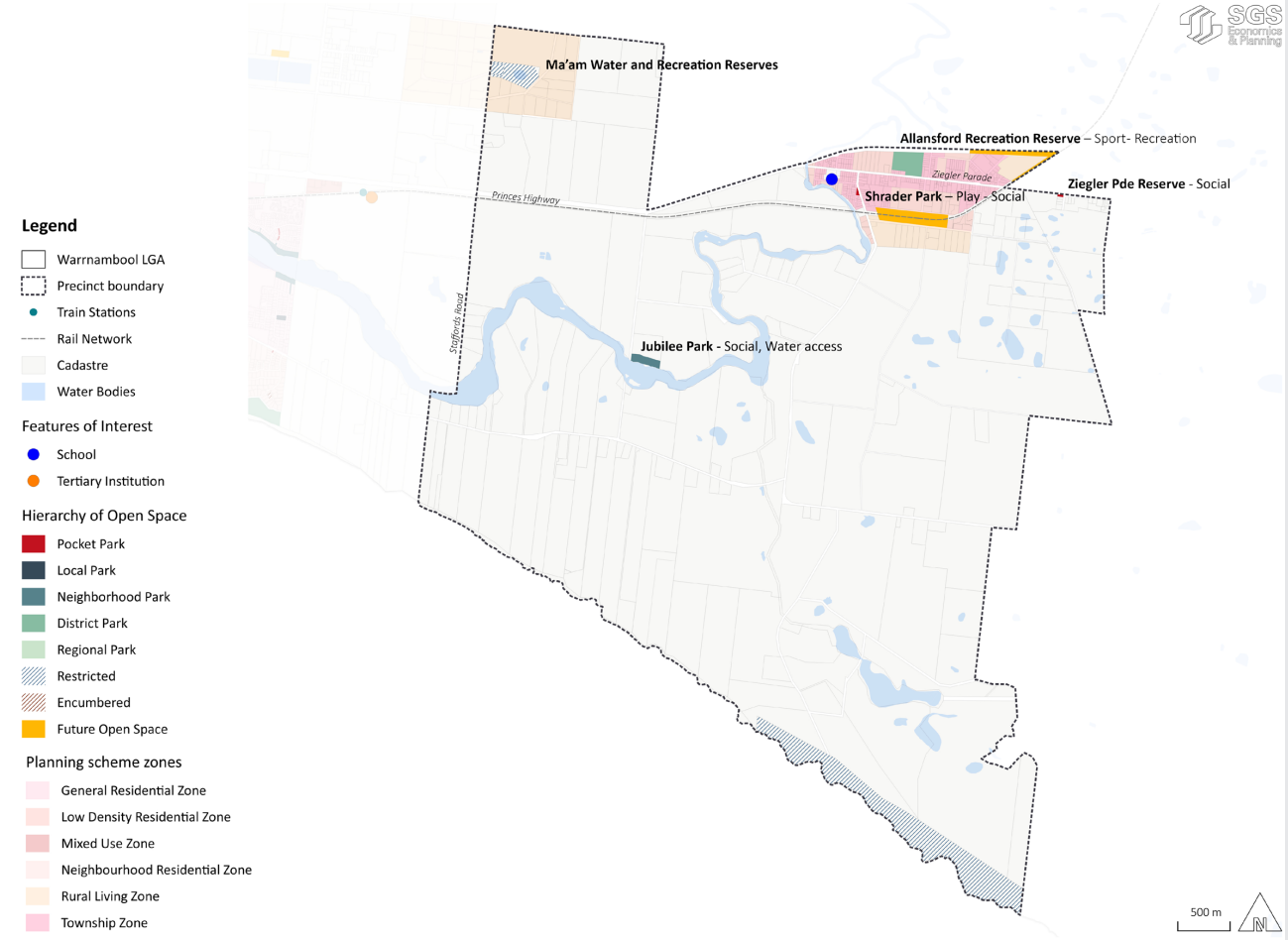
Grow: Increase access and linkage connections along the Merri River south of Bridge Road, while also protecting and improving biodiversity along the river.

Grow: Explore opportunities for Council to partner with other landowners to deliver a shared pathway from Woodford / Bushfield to Grange Road, Warrnambool along the Merri River as a generational project.

Population (2024)	1,042
Total open space	7.4ha
Quantity	70.8m^2 per capita
Accessibility	Not counted for rural, low density areas
Diversity	100% of open space over 0.2ha include more than 2 functions, which is above the LGA level of 54%

Assessment colours: Green: *meets or exceeds service standard,* **Orange:** *20% lower than service standard,* **Pink:** *more than 20% less than service standard*

Precinct 11: Allansford



The Allansford precinct is east of central Warrnambool with largely low density residential zones and no active transport connections into Warrnambool.

There are several key parcels of open space including the Allansford Recreation Reserve with a key sport function, and Jubilee Park, approximately 4km south of the Allansford township, which provides access to the Hopkins River.

There is low accessibility to open space in this precinct. While this is largely due to the low density residential living there are also limited connections to existing open space.

The open space around the rail corridor and the Hopkins River includes significant biodiversity components. These have been identified in the Allansford Strategic Framework Plan 2021 as potential opportunities to be further enhanced.

In addition, portions of the precinct are subject to flooding. While open space can support with flood mitigation, any infrastructure located on flood prone land also needs to be able to be adaptive.

Opportunities to improve open space in this precinct include:

Protect: As per the Allansford Strategic Framework Plan 2021, enhance biodiversity connections across the precinct.

Grow: Deliver improved linkage connections and additional open space across the township as per the Allansford Strategic Framework Plan 2021.

Grow: Explore opportunities to deliver a shared pathway that connects Allansford to Deakin University along the Hopkins River or railway line.

Population (2024)	1,189
Total open space	8.3ha
Quantity	69.7m^2 per capita
Accessibility	Not counted for rural, low density areas
Diversity	50% of open space more than 0.2ha includes more than 2 functions, which is lower the LGA level of 54%

Assessment colours: Green: *meets or exceeds service standard,* **Orange:** *20% lower than service standard,* **Pink:** *more than 20% less than service standard*


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Action Plan

The following section identifies the actions to be delivered across the life of the Strategy. This includes city-wide actions as well as Precinct specific actions. The actions include Councils role as well as anticipated qualitative cost. The definition of both of these elements is provided below:

Councils role

Council will play a range of roles to support the implementation of this Strategy. This includes:

Council role	Description
Provider (P)	Active involvement in delivering new open space and or new open space infrastructure
Planner (PL)	Work closely with the private sector, community groups, agencies, and service providers to coordinate planning, funding and delivery of open space
Funder (F)	Provide funds or assistance/support to organisations to access grants, establish governance structures and systems to deliver and manage open space
Advocate (A)	Advocate on behalf of the community to other tiers of government and the private sector to improve open space outcomes

Anticipated cost

Each of the actions includes an anticipated cost to support in forward planning. Further detailed costings will be required as projects are further scoped.

Cost	Description
$	low cost
$$	medium cost
$$$	high cost
$$$$	very high cost

City wide actions

	Actions	Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
1	Optimise: Develop an open space acquisition and disposal plan, with a particular focus on pocket parks and open space linkages.		x			1-5yrs	$
2	Optimise: Review and consider the need for additional formalised dog parks		x			1-5yrs	$
3	Optimise: In alignment with the Urban Forest Strategy and the Urban Forest Plan, increase the number of trees on open space with a priority on local indigenous species		x	x	x	1-5yrs	$$
4	Optimise: Undertake a review and an update of the Public Amenities Strategy 2013 to ensure public toilets are accessible across the open space network	x	x			1-5 yrs	$
5	Protect: Develop open space design guidelines in collaboration with Eastern Marr	x	x			1-5 yrs	$$
6	Grow: Following the findings of the open space contribution assessment, undertake a Planning Scheme Amendment to update the open space contribution rate in the schedule to Clause 53.01	x	x			1-5 yrs	$$
7	Optimise: Review local laws regarding prohibited areas for dogs	x	x			1-10yrs	$
8	Optimise: In alignment with the Play Space Strategic Framework, identify opportunities within Regional, District, Neighbourhood and Local playgrounds to provide improved shade, rain and wind protection, seating, BBQ, picnic areas	x	x		x	1-10yrs	$$$

		P	PL	F	A	Time	Cost
9	Optimise: In alignment with the Warrnambool Events Strategy 2024-28, undertake an assessment to identify open space to develop a dedicated regional all weather events space	x	x			1-15 yrs	$$
10	Optimise: Deliver 30% tree canopy coverage across Warrnambool's public open space by 2050	x	x			1-25yrs	$$
11	Optimise: Undertake an audit of informal sporting and fitness infra-structure to identify gaps and partner with public landowners and land managers to provide informal sporting and fitness infrastructure	x	x		x	5-10yrs	$$
12	Protect: Work with Eastern Marr to explore opportunities to improve wayfinding and educational signage that includes Aboriginal Cultural significance	x	x		x	5-10 yrs	$$
13	Optimise: In alignment with the Active Warrnambool Strategy increase access to infrastructure for people of all abilities, for women and girls, and culturally diverse community members	x	x	x	x	5-10yrs	$$$
14	Optimise: Implement the Active Warrnambool Strategy, Sustainable Transport Strategy and Principal Pedestrian Network to improve access to shared paths, crossings and improved lighting	x	x			10-15yrs	$$$
15	Optimise: Explore opportunities to partner with public and private landowners to pursue integrated water management, roof water harvesting, and flood mitigation projects (including wetlands) on underutilised open space	x	x	x	x	Ongoing	$$$
16	Optimise: In alignment with the Healthy Warrnambool 2025-29 identify open space sites that can support community food growing initiatives	x	x	x		Ongoing	$$
17	Optimise: Continue to review maintenance schedule of open spaces with mowing/ weeding/ pruning needs, prioritising high use areas and around waterways	x	x			Ongoing	$

Central Precinct

Actions		Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
1.1	Grow: Implement the Actions contained within Lake Pertobe Mas-terplan, including investigating pathways between Harris Street Oval and Lake Pertobe, and between Lake Pertobe and the CBD	x	x	x		1-5 yrs	$$$
1.2	Grow: Explore opportunities to further connect Fletcher Jones Re-serve with the Fletcher Jones Gardens.	x			x	5-10yrs	$$
1.3	Optimise: As outlined in the City Centre Revitalisation Plan, investi-gate the transformation of Cannon Hill into a significant open space asset in central Warrnambool.	x	x	x		5-10yrs	$$$
1.4	Optimise: Implement the actions contained within the Foreshore Strategic Framework plan to improve amenity and access to open space across the Foreshore, and pedestrian access between the foreshore and the city.	x	x	x		10-15yrs	$$$
1.5	Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs including Nicholson St Re-serve, Koroit St Reserve and Shirley Gr Reserve.	x				1-5yrs	$

Botanic Precinct

	Actions	Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
2.1	Optimise: Implement the Botanic Local Area Traffic Management Plan, which includes widening the Russell Creek path network.	x			x	1-5yrs	$$$
2.2	Optimise: Implement the Botanic Local Area Traffic Management Plan, which includes widening the Russell Creek path network.	x		x		1-5yrs	$$
2.3	Protect: Explore opportunities to create wetlands and increase biodiversity in strategic areas such as along Russell Creek and St James Park	x	x	x		1-5yrs	$$
2.4	Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs including Swan St Reserve, Barbers Ln Reserve	x				1-5yrs	$
2.5	Optimise: Improve the quality of open space along Merri River, in alignment with the South of the Merri Open Space Precinct Plan.	x	x	x	x	5-10yrs	$$

East Racecourse Precinct

	Actions	Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
3.1	Grow: Explore partnership opportunities to increase community access to open space available at the Racecourse.				x	1-5yrs	$
3.2	Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs including Curtin Ct Reserve and Lancefield St Reserve.	x				1-5yrs	$
3.3	Protect: Protect and improve the quality of nature functions at Albert Park Reserve in alignment with the Albert Park Revegetation Plan 2022.	x		x		1-10yrs	$$
3.4	Grow: Improve connections between Brierly Recreational Reserve, Albert Park Reserve, and Russells Creek.	x		x	x	5-10yrs	$$

South East – Hopkins Precinct

	Actions	Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
4.1	Optimise: Review the functions and flood constraints on Scoborio Reserve and EJ King Park and consider if a Master Plan or Precinct Plan is required to support future improvement opportunities.		x	x		1-5yrs	$
4.2	Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs including Hopkins River Frontage, Ferguson St Reserve, Riversdale Ct Reserve, Auty St Reserve, and Freycinet Ct Reserve.	x	x	x		1-5yrs	$
4.3	Grow: Work with developers to provide additional open space through the Hopkins Heights development. Ensure this open space is of high quality, connected, and multi-functional.				x	1-10yrs	$
4.4	Grow: Explore the delivery of a shared pathway along the Hopkins River or train line towards Deakin University.	x	x	x	x	5-10yrs	$$$

North East Precinct

	Actions	Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
5.1	Protect: Through the delivery of the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan, work with the State Government to protect Francis Tozer Memorial through a rezoning from farming land to conservation land and the consideration of appropriate buffers.				x	1-5yrs	$
5.2	Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs including Wangoom Water Reserve.	x	x	x		1-5yrs	$
5.3	Grow: Investigate opportunities to improve pedestrian linkages between existing open spaces and new planned open spaces.		x		x	1-10yrs	$$
5.4	Grow: Work with future developers to provide additional open space through the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan. Ensure this open space is of high quality, connected, and multi-functional.		x		x	5-10yrs	$

West Precinct

	Actions	Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
6.1	Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs including Boronia Ct, Heritage Ct Reserve, Hibiscus Ave, Saywell Ct Reserve, Lucas Ct Reserve, Mannix St Reserve, and McPherson Cres Reserve.	x	x	x		1-5yrs	$
6.2	Optimise: Improve the quality of open space along Merri River, in alignment with the South of the Merri Open Space Precinct Plan. This includes the Woodend Road Reserve, Manuka Dr Reserve, and Platypus Park Reserve.	x	x	x	x	5-10 yrs	$$
6.3	Grow: Explore opportunity to provide new open space through the redevelopment of the saleyard	x	x	x	x	1-10 yrs	$$$

South Precinct

	Actions	Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
7.1	Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs including 59 Merrivale Dr, Fairway Cr (East), Fairway Cr (West), Marrang Park Reserve, McMeekin Rd Reserve, Clancey Ct Reserve, Apex Reserve, Fitzroy Rd Reserve, and 27 Harrington Rd.	x	x	x		1-5yrs	$
7.2	Optimise: Review the long term use of Merri Cresent Reserve.	x			x	5-10yrs	$
7.3	Grow: Explore opportunities to increase open space and green infrastructure in the West Warrnambool industrial estate.	x	x	x	x	1-10yrs	$$
7.4	Protect: In alignment with the Wild Coast Master Plan 2021, ensure conservation land is protected through enhancing biodiversity and strategically placed and maintained walking, education, and cultural infrastructure.		x		x	1-20yrs	$

Dennington Precinct

	Actions	Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
8.1	Optimise: Review the quality and capacity of Dennington Reserve to ensure the sporting functions can meet future participation demands. Should it be required, improvements could include lighting, maintenance, and or partnerships with St Johns Primary School to share infrastructure.	x	x	x		1-5yrs	$$
8.2	Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs including Adriana Cres Reserve and 24 Darwinia St.	x	x	x		1-5yrs	$
8.3	Grow: Work with future developers to deliver new open space linkages as per the North Dennington Development Plan 2015. In doing so optimise opportunities to increase tree canopy, connections with existing open space, and integrate open space functions in encumbered land where appropriate.	x	x		x	1-10yrs	$$

North Merri Precinct

	Actions	Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
9.1	Optimise: Review smaller parcels of open space to ensure they are able to meet current and future needs including Caramut Rd Reserve and its future role.	x	x	x		1-5yrs	$
9.2	Grow: Work with future developers to deliver new open space and bridge connection points as per the North of the Merri Structure Plan. Ensure this open space is of high quality, connected, and multi-functional.	x	x		x	1-10yrs	$$
9.3	Grow: Work in landowners to investigate opportunities to create a linkage along the Merri River from this Precinct to Woodford.	x	x	x	x	5-15yrs	$$$
9.4	Protect: As the area is developed south of Grange Road, work with landowners to ensure an adequate biodiversity and open space buffer is provided to complete the link between Grange Road and Wollaston Road along the Merri River.	x	x	x	x	1-10yrs	$$

Bushfield – Woodford Precinct

	Actions	Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
10.1	Grow: Explore opportunities to partner with the State Government to deliver safe connections along and across Bridge Road and the Hopkins Highway to increase access to Bushfield Recreation Reserve and Jubilee Park.		x		x	1-10yrs	$$
10.2	Grow: Work with land owners to explore opportunities to increase access and linkage connections along the Merri River south of Bridge Road, while also protecting and improving biodiversity along the river.	x	x	x	x	5-15yrs	$$
10.3	Grow: Explore opportunities for Council to partner with other landowners to deliver a shared pathway from Woodford / Bushfield to Grange Road, Warrnambool along the Merri River as a generational project.	x	x	x	x	15-20yrs	$$$

Allansford

	Actions	Council role				Time	Cost
		P	PL	F	A		
11.1	Protect: As per the Allansford Strategic Framework Plan 2021, enhance biodiversity connections across the precinct.	x	x	x	x	1-10yrs	$$
11.2	Grow: Deliver improved linkage connections and additional open space across the township as per the Allansford Strategic Framework Plan 2021.	x	x	x		1-15yrs	$$$
11.3	Grow: Explore opportunities to deliver a shared pathway that connects Allansford to Deakin University along the Hopkins River or railway line.	x	x	x	x	15-20yrs	$$$

Monitoring and evaluation

The Open Space Strategy and action plan provides a range of actions to be delivered across the 15 year time-frame. Over this timeframe Council will track progress as well as review and update actions as required. These reviews will aim to respond to changing community trends, potential partnership opportunities, and or funding availability.

The Strategy will be supported by an internal working group and undertake an annual review of progress, noting which actions are in progress, completed, not started, or need to be reviewed.

A detailed review will occur every four years which will monitor progress against the below measures of success. These measures consider accessibility, functionality and quality across the open space network to ensure this is improving.

Measures of success:

- **Accessibility:** 95% of dwellings in urban areas are within 400m of open space
- **Diversity:** All open space greater than 0.2ha has a minimum of 2 identified functions
- **Optimisation:** All open space has a clear function
- **Quality:** State of open space assets are an average of 3 or less
- **Community needs:** 75% of the community are satisfied with the open space network
- **Sustainability:** 30% of tree canopy cover across the open space network



Appendix 1: Open space assets

Summary of public open space

Asset Name	Precinct	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4
Ziegler Pde Reserve	Allansford	Pocket Park	0.11	Social			
Shrader Park Reserve	Allansford	Pocket Park	0.14	Play	Social		
Jubilee Park Reserve (Allansford)	Allansford	Neighbourhood Park	2.09	Social			
Allansford Recreation Reserve	Allansford	District Park	5.95	Sport	Social		
Iona/Orchid Reserve	Botanic	Pocket Park	0.09	Social	Play		
Swan St Reserve	Botanic	Pocket Park	0.11	Social			
Barbers La Reserve	Botanic	Pocket Park	0.13	Social			
J. Swan Reserve	Botanic	Local Park	0.91	Social	Play		
Lutana/Serenity Reserve	Botanic	Local Park	0.21	Social			
Aquazone Reserve	Botanic	Neighbourhood Park	2.42	Social			
Jamieson St Reserve	Botanic	Neighbourhood Park		Social			
Russells Creek Reserve (Queens Rd - Mortlake Rd)	Botanic	Neighbourhood Park	1.40	Social	Linkage		
Queens Rd Reserve (West)	Botanic	Neighbourhood Park	1.39	Social			
Botanic Gardens Reserve	Botanic	District Park	8.13	Social	Story, art and education	Events	
St James Park Reserve	Botanic	District Park	6.02	Social			
Queens Rd Reserve (East)	Botanic	District Park		Social			
Russells Creek Reserve (Ardlie St - Bromfield St)	Botanic	District Park	8.05	Social	Linkage		

Asset Name	Precinct	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4
Rodger Pl Reserve	Bushfield - Woodford	Pocket Park	0.04	Linkage			
Mechanics Institute Park Reserve	Bushfield - Woodford	Pocket Park	0.19	Social			
Jubilee Park Reserve (Woodford)	Bushfield - Woodford	Neighbourhood Park	2.91	Social	Sport	Play	
Bushfield Recreation Reserve	Bushfield - Woodford	Neighbourhood Park	4.24	Sport	Play		
Civic Green Reserve	Central	Pocket Park	0.20	Social	Civic	Events	
Fletcher Jones Reserve	Central	Pocket Park	0.07	Social			
Nicholson St Reserve	Central	Pocket Park	0.16	Social			
Norfolk Pl Reserve	Central	Pocket Park	0.16	Social			
Koroit St Reserve	Central	Pocket Park	0.09	Social			
Shirley Gr Reserve	Central	Pocket Park	0.04	Social			
Surfside Holiday Park Reserve	Central	Local Park	0.56	Social	Linkage		
Flagstaff Hill Reserve	Central	Local Park	0.38	Social			
Ryot St Reserve	Central	Local Park	0.27	Social			
Cannon Hill Reserve	Central	Neighbourhood Park	3.29	Social	Vistas		
Foreshore Reserve (Lady Bay to Flume)	Central	Regional Park	17.72	Nature	Vistas		
Lake Pertobe Recreation Reserve	Central	Regional Park	63.75	Social	Nature	Play	Events
Jetty Flat Reserve	Central	Regional Park		Sport			
Warrnambool Lawn Tennis Reserve	Central	Regional Park		Sport			

Asset Name	Precinct	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4
Dennington War Memorial Reserve	Dennington	Pocket Park	0.01	Civic			
Adriana/Grevillia Reserve	Dennington	Pocket Park	0.18	Linkage			
Cole Cl Reserve	Dennington	Pocket Park	0.04	Linkage			
Darwinia St Reserve	Dennington	Pocket Park	0.03	Social			
Cowie Cl Reserve	Dennington	Pocket Park	0.01	Linkage			
Grevillia/Adriana Reserve	Dennington	Pocket Park	0.02	Linkage			
Grevillia/Hakea Reserve	Dennington	Pocket Park	0.02	Linkage	Social		
Reserve: Coghlans Rd (196)	Dennington	Local Park	0.24	Social			
W.P. O'Sullivan Reserve	Dennington	Local Park	0.31	Social	Play		
Adriana Cres Reserve	Dennington	Local Park	0.35	Social			
Pappas Dr Reserve	Dennington	Local Park	0.22	Social			
Merri River Reserve (Atkinsons La)	Dennington	Neighbourhood Park	3.44	Nature			
Dennington Rowing Club Reserve	Dennington	Neighbourhood Park	2.07	Sport			
Dennington Bowls Club Reserve	Dennington	Neighbourhood Park		Sport			
Merri River Reserve (Swinton St)	Dennington	District Park	14.87	Nature			
Dennington Recreation Reserve	Dennington	District Park	5.72	Sport	Social		
Collina Ct Reserve	East - Racecourse	Pocket Park	0.01	Linkage			
Dunroe Ct Reserve	East - Racecourse	Pocket Park	0.02	Linkage			
Beechnut Pl Reserve	East - Racecourse	Pocket Park	0.13	Social	Linkage		
Cassie Cl Reserve	East - Racecourse	Pocket Park	0.15	Social	Linkage		
McKellar Ct Reserve	East - Racecourse	Pocket Park	0.02	Linkage			
McKenna Pl Reserve	East - Racecourse	Pocket Park	0.08	Social	Linkage		
Baileyana/Stacey Reserve	East - Racecourse	Pocket Park	0.19	Social			
Baeckea/Laurina Reserve	East - Racecourse	Pocket Park	0.20	Social	Play		
Baeckea/Dales Reserve	East - Racecourse	Pocket Park	0.02	Social	Linkage		
Baker Gr Reserve	East - Racecourse	Pocket Park	0.06	Linkage			
Donald Ct Reserve	East - Racecourse	Pocket Park	0.08	Social	Play		
Wooles Ave Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.55	Social	Play		

Asset Name	Precinct	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4
Kingfisher Gr Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.39	Social	Linkage		
Wanstead St Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.33	Social	Linkage		
Raglan Pde Reserve (Kingfisher Gr - Glenrowe Ave)	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.59	Social	Linkage		
Raglan Pde Reserve (Glenrowe Ave - rear Ryan Ct)	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.24	Social	Linkage		
Wesak/Alice Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.24	Social	Play		
Armstrong Gr Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.82	Social	Linkage		
Caroville Dr Reserve (East)	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.23	Social	Linkage		
Caroville Dr Reserve (West)	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.58	Social	Linkage		
Hoki St Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.49	Social			
Water Tower Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.52	Social	Play		
Loyola Ave Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.31	Social			
Lancefield St Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.31	Social			
Breton St Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.30	Social	Play		
Curtin Ct Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.50	Social			
Hayley Dr Reserve	East - Racecourse	Local Park	0.24	Social	Play		
Russells Creek Reserve (Mortlake Rd - Garden St)	East - Racecourse	District Park	5.71	Social	Linkage		
Moonah St Recreation Reserve	East - Racecourse	District Park		Social	Play		
Albert Park Reserve	East - Racecourse	Regional Park	44.53	Social	Sport		
Albert Park Reserve: Miura Friendship Garden	East - Racecourse	Regional Park		Social	Play		
Albert Park Reserve: Warrnambool Community Gardens	East - Racecourse	Regional Park		Social			
Albert Park Reserve: Grieve St Playground	East - Racecourse	Regional Park		Social	Play		

Asset Name	Precinct	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4
Mitchell St Reserve	North East	Pocket Park	0.04	Linkage			
Boston Dr Reserve	North East	Pocket Park	0.09	Social	Linkage		
Wendy Pl Reserve	North East	Local Park	0.26	Social			
Toohey Estate Reserve	North East	Local Park	0.72	Social	Play		
Wangoom Water Reserve: Mort-lake Rd	North East	Local Park	0.89	Social			
Marrakai Reserve	North East	Neighbourhood Park	3.29	Social	Linkage		
Russells Creek Reserve (Boston Dr - Wangoom Rd)	North East	Neighbourhood Park		Social	Linkage		
Russells Creek Reserve (Wares Rd - Whites Rd)	North East	Neighbourhood Park	1.41	Social	Linkage		
Russells Creek Reserve (Garden St - Wares Rd)	North East	Neighbourhood Park	2.75	Social	Linkage		
Russells Creek Reserve (Whites Rd - Booval St)	North East	Neighbourhood Park	2.23	Social	Linkage		
Witton Dr Reserve	North East	Neighbourhood Park		Social	Linkage		
Rawlings Dr Reserve	North East	Neighbourhood Park	1.53	Social	Linkage		
Brierly Recreation Reserve	North East	District Park	12.57	Sport	Social	Play	
Francis Tozer Memorial Reserve	North East	Regional Park	19.63	Nature	Story, art and educa-tion		
McIntyre Ct Reserve	North of Merri	Pocket Park	0.01	Social			
Caramut Rd Reserve	North of Merri	Local Park	0.40	Nature			
Witham Park Reserve	North of Merri	Local Park	0.82	Social	Play		

Asset Name	Precinct	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4
Granter St Reserve	South	Pocket Park	0.02	Linkage			
Cody Pl Reserve	South	Pocket Park	0.04	Social			
Fitzroy Rd Reserve	South	Pocket Park	0.08	Social			
Mahogany Gardens Reserve (West)	South	Pocket Park	0.05	Social			
McMeekin Rd Reserve	South	Local Park	0.98				
Warrnambool Skate Park Reserve	South	Local Park	0.33	Play			
Archibald St Reserve	South	Local Park	0.61	Social	Play		
Clancey Ct Reserve	South	Local Park	0.86	Social			
Fairway Cr Reserve (East)	South	Local Park	0.24	Social			
Fairway Cr Reserve (West)	South	Local Park	0.30	Social			
Fitzroy Rd Reserve	South	Local Park	0.59	Social			
Mahogany Gardens Reserve (East)	South	Local Park	0.25	Social	Play		
Marang Park Reserve	South	Local Park	0.90	Social			
Merrivale Dr Reserve	South	Local Park	0.48	Social			
Merri Cres Reserve	South	Neighbourhood Park	1.27	Nature			
Harrington Rd (27) Reserve	South	Neighbourhood Park	2.28	Social			
Merrivale Recreation Reserve	South	Neighbourhood Park	4.70	Sport	Play		
Harris St Reserve	South	District Park	5.39	Sport			
Foreshore Reserve (Breakwater to Lady Bay)	South	Regional Park	17.80	Nature	Vistas		
Friendly Societies Recreation Reserve	South	Regional Park	20.37	Sport			
Victoria Park Reserve	South	Regional Park		Social	Sport	Dog walking	

Asset Name	Precinct	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4
Dobson Way/Greenvale Ct Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.08	Linkage			
Dunvegan Way/Greenvale Ct Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.05	Linkage			
Raglan Pde Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.03	Linkage			
Reserve: 14 Von Guerard Blvd	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.03	Social			
Reserve: Astbury Ct (3)	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.03	Linkage			
Riverview Tce Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.08	Linkage			
Auty St Reserve (East)	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.13	Social	Play		
Auty St Reserve (West)	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.06	Social			
Ferguson St Reserve (East)	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.03	Social			
Ferguson St Reserve (West)	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.02	Social			
Freycinet Ct Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.02	Social			
Ilex Ave/Flaxman St Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.06	Social			
Riverdale Ct Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.09	Social			
Thompson St Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Pocket Park	0.04	Social			
Glenview Dr Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Local Park	0.24	Social			
Motang Drive Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Local Park	0.40	Social			
Reserve: 14 Von Guerard Blvd	South East - Hopkins	Local Park	0.23	Social			
Reserve: Southern Ocean Blvd (29)	South East - Hopkins	Local Park	0.25	Social	Nature		
Hopkins River Reserve: Mahoneys Rd	South East - Hopkins	Neighbourhood Park	2.98	Social			
Dobson Way Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Neighbourhood Park		Social	Linkage		
Motang Dr: Hopkins River Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Neighbourhood Park	1.13	Social	Nature		
D. W. Jones Oval Reserve	South East - Hopkins	Neighbourhood Park	3.14	Sport			
Scoborio Reserve	South East - Hopkins	District Park	6.35	Social	Social		
E. J. King Park Reserve	South East - Hopkins	District Park		Social			
Hopkins River Frontage: Simpson St Reserve	South East - Hopkins	District Park		Social			
Logans Beach Reserve (Lookout)	South East - Hopkins	District Park	5.88	Social	Nature	Vistas	
Southern Ocean Blvd Reserve	South East - Hopkins	District Park	6.63	Social	Nature		

Asset Name	Precinct	Hierarchy	Size (ha)	Function 1	Function 2	Function 3	Function 4
Tania Ct Reserve	West	Pocket Park	0.03	Linkage			
Boronia Ct Reserve	West	Pocket Park	0.19	Social			
Chisholm/Natalie Reserve	West	Pocket Park	0.18	Social			
Crawley St Reserve (West)	West	Pocket Park	0.18	Social			
Hibiscus Ave Reserve	West	Pocket Park	0.18	Social			
Kermond Ct Reserve	West	Pocket Park	0.10	Social			
McPherson Cres Reserve	West	Pocket Park	0.13	Social			
Nicolls Dr Reserve	West	Pocket Park	0.03	Social	Play		
Saywell Ct Reserve	West	Pocket Park	0.05	Social			
Barton Ct Reserve	West	Local Park	0.25	Social			
Crawley St Reserve (East)	West	Local Park	0.45	Social	Play		
Heritage Ct Reserve	West	Local Park	0.36	Social			
Karana Dr Reserve	West	Local Park	0.27	Social	Play		
Lucas Ct Reserve	West	Local Park	0.23	Social			
Mannix St Reserve	West	Local Park	0.24	Social			
Pecten Ave Reserve	West	Local Park	0.66	Social	Play		
Woodend Road Reserve	West	Neighbourhood Park	2.86	Nature	Social		
Platypus Park Reserve	West				Play		
Russells Creek Reserve (Daltons Rd - Merri River)	West				Linkage		
Manuka Dr Reserve	West	Neighbourhood Park	2.67	Social			
A. H. Davidson Oval Reserve	West	Neighbourhood Park	4.18	Sport	Play		

Appendix 2: Open space infrastructure

Key:
- Likely to be included with the open space function
- Maybe included with the open space function

Open space hierarchy and functions: The following provides an overview of what hierarchy the open space functions can be provided on, and where ideally, they should be avoided due to size.

Across the different hierarchies the level of supporting infrastructure may vary e.g. event space on a neighbourhood park will likely be much smaller than an event space provided in on a regional park. The locations for these functions should be guided by the Active Warrnambool, Play Space Strategic Framework, Green Warrnambool, Tourism and Events and other enabling infrastructure strategies.

	Hierarchy				
Functions	**Pocket Park**	**Local**	**Neighbourhood**	**District**	**Regional**
Sport			(if 5ha)		
Civic					
Nature					
Linkage					
Events					
Play					
Social					
Story, art & education					
Vistas					
Dog walking					

Infrastructure on public open space: : The following provides an overview of the types of infrastructure that can be provided across the different open space functions. When contemplating open space infrastructure and the amount of infrastructure, Council should consider the hierarchy (size) and capacity of the open space. The purpose of this table is to provide guidance on what infrastructure is likely to be included with specific functions.

Key:
- Likely to be included with the open space function
- Maybe included with the open space function

	Functions									
Infrastructure	**Sport**	**Civic**	**Nature**	**Linkage**	**Events**	**Play**	**Social**	**Story, art & education**	**Vistas**	**Dog walking**
Open areas		■			■		■			■
Planting / biodiversity linkages			■	■			■	■	■	
Natural play elements						■				
Play equipment						■				
Fencing	▪					▪				
Basketball ring/hitting wall						■	■			
Skateboard area						■	■			
Fitness equipment				■		■	■			
Public toilets	■	■		▪	■	▪				
Sports playing areas	■									
Multi-purpose pavilions / change rooms	■									
Training fields/cricket practice nets	■									
Courts - tennis/netball/ multi-use	■									

	Functions									
Infrastructure	**Sport**	**Civic**	**Nature**	**Linkage**	**Events**	**Play**	**Social**	**Story, art & education**	**Vistas**	**Dog walking**
Shared pedestrian/bike path										
Seating										
Picnic tables										
Rubbish bins										
Bike racks										
Barbeques										
Shade structure/shelter										
Drinking fountain										
Information signage										
Artworks/sculptures										
Power and AV connections										
Lighting										
WIFI										
Carparking										
Irrigation										

WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Open Space Contributions Report

July 2026



www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au



Adopted by Council 3 August 2026

This report has been prepared for Warrnambool City Council. SGS Economics and Planning has taken all due care in the preparation of this report. However, SGS and its associated consultants are not liable to any person or entity for any damage or loss that has occurred, or may occur, in relation to that person or entity taking or not taking action in respect of any representation, statement, opinion or advice referred to herein.

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Executive Summary

SGS Economics and Planning (SGS) was engaged to provide an independent analysis of open space contribution requirements for the City of Warrnambool (Council). In addressing this brief, this report considers:

- **Current policy:** including state and local planning scheme provisions, municipal policy and plans, and open space contributions rates in other local government areas.
- **Population, housing capacity, and development capacity:** an analysis of forecast population, dwellings, employment, and available developable land.
- **Current state of open space:** an analysis of the existing open space network and considerations of future focus areas..
- **Contribution rate:** based on the above data, development of a contribution rate for the municipality.
- **Implementation:** recommendations for how this contribution rate should be applied.

Councils in Victoria can raise development contributions for the provision of municipal open space through various methods. This project focuses on the levying ability under the Subdivision Act, which allows for the incorporation of municipal-wide or district/area-specific contribution rates into the Planning Scheme through amendments to the Schedule to Clause 53.01.

The Warrnambool Planning Scheme currently includes open space contributions under Clause 53.01. These are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1. Schedule to Clause 53.01 Public Open Space Contributions and Subdivision

Type or location of subdivision	Amount of contribution for public open space
Land within the North of the Merri River Structure Plan	1.67% Land/and or cash contribution requirements must be in accordance with the North of the Merri River Development Contributions Plan (September, 2011).
Land within the North Dennington Structure Plan area (excluding Dennington Rise)	3% cash contribution in accordance with the North Dennington Development Contributions Plan (November, 2014).

SGS has applied an inclusionary provision methodology to assess the appropriate open space contribution rate for the future, treating the municipality as a single community with a single public open space (POS) system. This means that all development across the municipality contributes to the cost of acquiring and developing the POS system on an equitable basis, regardless of the development life cycle. It applies regardless of whether the development is for residential or employment purposes, as all these land uses require access to the POS system. The network considers quantity, accessibility, quality, and ongoing reliability of land.

When considering the forecast population and dwelling capacity, net developable land (minus land zoned Rural Living and Low Density), and the application of the open space standard of 30sqm per capita, an open space contribution rate of 5.17% is reached for standard density development. A figure of 4.65% is indicated for Rural Living and Low Density Residential areas to ensure that all development across the municipality makes broadly the same contribution on a per dwelling basis, regardless of density.

As noted earlier, the Warrnambool Planning Scheme includes various site-specific contribution rates. These rates have been developed based on individual catchment assessments. It is not advised that these be altered. As such, it is recommended that the following changes be made to the Planning Scheme:

Table 2. Recommended changes to Public Open Space Contributions and Subdivision

Type or location of subdivision	Current amount of contribution for public open space	Recommended amount of contribution for public open space
Land within the North of the Merri River Structure Plan	1.67%	No change
Land within the North Dennington Structure Plan area (excluding Dennington Rise)	3%	No change
Land covered by the incorporated East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan	3.81% (Draft for consultation at the time of writing this report)	No change
All other employment and residential land (other than land zoned Rural Living and Low Density Residential)	Up to 5% (through the Subdivision Act)	5.17%
Land zoned Rural Living and Low Density Residential	Up to 5% (through the Subdivision Act)	4.65%

For comparison, not for benchmarking against, this report includes a selection of recently adopted open space contribution rates. The recommended rate for the City of Warrnambool generally aligns with recent regional figures.

The SGS methodology has aimed to capture the nominal 'development capacity of the city'. If there is a significant change in the city's residential development capacity beyond what has been modelled in this analysis, the open space contribution should be reassessed.



1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The City of Warrnambool spans 120 square kilometres in Victoria's South West. It includes the Warrnambool City Centre, along with surrounding townships including Dennington, Allansford, Bushfield and Woodford. The City of Warrnambool is the principal service centre for south-western Victoria, and its economy generates output (total sales) of some $5.9 billion annually, accounting for about 23.9% of the Great South Coast region's economic output. Major industries and services include healthcare and social assistance, retail, education and training, and construction and manufacturing.[1]

The population of the City of Warrnambool in 2024 was 35,406.[2] According to the Warrnambool Economic Development Strategy 2023-2028, the city has approximately 2,916 businesses and 18,518 local jobs. Industries that are driving employment in the local economy are Knowledge & Public Sector Industries (Health and Education), Primary Industries and Trade (Manufacturing, Construction, Utilities), and Population and Tourism Services (Retail Trade, Accommodation & Food Services, Personal Services).[3]

In 2014, Council adopted the Warrnambool Open Space Strategy 2014, which provided a planned approach for the provision of open space across the city. It has been some time since the development of this Strategy. As such, Council is developing a new Open Space Strategy to guide the improvement, acquisition, and development of open spaces, parks, and reserves across the municipality. The Strategy will outline principles, priorities, and actions that will inform Council's decision-making processes, future investment, and development contributions. A key component of this Strategy development is to review the public open space contributions.

Open space contributions

Councils in Victoria can collect development contributions for the provision of municipal open space via three mechanisms:

1. Embed levies in a Development Contribution Plan (DCP) or Infrastructure Contribution Plan (ICP) made under Part 3AB and Part 3B of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.
2. Rely on the general power to levy development upon the creation of separate allotments under the Subdivision Act 1988.
3. Codify the levy power under the Subdivision Act by incorporating municipal-wide or district/area-specific contribution rates in the Planning Scheme by amending the Schedule to Clause 53.01 of the Planning Scheme.

Currently, Council is collecting open space contributions via all three methods applicable to specific land within the municipality.

Subdivision Act

- Up to 5% in areas not covered by the provisions below

Planning Scheme, Clause 53.01

- 1.67% Land within the North of the Merri River Structure Plan
- 3% Land within the North Dennington Structure Plan area (excluding Dennington Rise)
- Pending 3.81% Land covered by the incorporated East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan (draft)

Development contributions DCP/ICP or other development levy

- DCPO1 for North of the Merri River Development Contributions Plan
- DCPO2 for the North Dennington Growth Area (excluding Dennington Rise)
- Pending DCP for the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan (draft) 3.96%

Within the Warrnambool Planning Scheme, the Schedule to Clause 53.01 Public Open Space Contribution and Subdivision requires specific land areas to provide a contribution rate between 1.67% and 3%. Additionally, a contribution rate of 3.81% is proposed for the land covered by the Draft East of Aberline PSP. Beyond specific locations identified in the Scheme, all other land can be required to provide up to a 5% open space contribution, though this is subject to negotiation under the Subdivision Act 1988 (Table 3).

1 *Warrnambool City Council (2025), 2025-2029 Warrnambool City Council Plan – Accessed 20 October 2025 https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/sites/warrnambool.vic.gov.au/files/documents/council/about/planning%20and%20reporting/WCC%20Plan%202021-2025%20final_0.pdf*

2 *State of Warrnambool Report, SGS Economics and Planning 2024.*

3 *Warrnambool City Council (2023), Warrnambool Economic Development Strategy 2023-2028 – accessed 6 October 2025 https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/sites/warrnambool.vic.gov.au/files/documents/council/about/strategic%20plans/Warrnambool%20Economic%20Development%20Strategy.pdf*

Table 3. Schedule to Clause 53.01 Public Open Space Contributions and Subdivision

Type or location of subdivision	Amount of contribution for public open space
Land within the North of the Merri River Structure Plan	1.67% Land/and or cash contribution requirements must be in accordance with the North of the Merri River Development Contributions Plan (May, 2024).
Land within the North Dennington Structure Plan area (excluding Dennington Rise)	3% cash contribution in accordance with the North Dennington Development Contributions Plan (November, 2014).
Land covered by the incorporated East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan	3.81% of Net Developable Area Land and/or cash contributions must be in accordance with the incorporated East of Aberline Development Contributions Plan. (Draft for consultation at the time of writing this report)

1.2 Defining Open Space

The Subdivision Act 1988 only allows Council to spend Public Open Space Contributions (collected under Clause 53.01 and any Schedules to it) on acquiring or enhancing public open space as defined by the Act.

Public Open Space is defined in Section 18A of the Subdivision Act of 1988 as:

Public open space means land set aside in a plan or land in a plan zoned or reserved under a planning scheme –
a) For public recreation or public resort, or
b) As parklands
c) For similar purposes

This definition must be applied when determining how and where open space contributions are expended. For the purposes of this report, when discussing open space, the report refers to land in which the primary purpose is public resort or recreation and is zoned as per the planning scheme definition outlined above.

1.3 Open space contribution principles

The open space contribution methodology applied in this report is based on an inclusionary provisions approach and the application of an open space standard. The inclusionary provision approach (which is further developed in Section 3) refers to the following principles:

- The municipality in question should be treated as one planning unit featuring one open space network.
- The local government area's (LGA) open space network should be established and maintained with reference to adequate:
  - quantity
  - accessibility/distribution
  - quality/level of service, and
  - reliability of ongoing service provision
- All development should contribute its fair share towards an adequate open space network for the planning unit, regardless of the development life cycle of the local government area; and
- All development that benefits directly or indirectly from the open space network should contribute regardless of land use type.

The open space standard refers to 3 hectares per 1,000 population or 30 square metres per person.

The following table defines the key terminology used throughout this report.

Table 4. Terminology

Term	Definition
Planning unit	Unless otherwise specified, the Local Government Area (LGA) is the planning unit.
Net Developable Area (NDA)	All land within the planning unit that is available for development, i.e. zoned for residential, most employment uses and recreational park zones (PPRZ). This excludes conservation land, arterial roads, railway corridors, and special uses such as golf courses and other restricted uses.
Standard density area	All land within the NDA other than the Low Density Residential Zone, Rural Living Zone.
Low density area	Land within the Low Density Residential Zone or Rural Living Zone, including open space within that area.

2. Policy context

The following section highlights key policies and/or directions that are important when considering open space contributions.

2.1 Victorian State Government

There is no adopted state government approach for calculating open space contributions. The State has a Plan for Victoria, an Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne and several guidance documents to support councils in developing an open space strategy, including the recently released Guide for Open Space Strategies. However, these do not include a standardised approach to open space contributions. A summary of key state documents is provided below.

Guide for Open Space Strategies, 2025

The development of the Guide for Open Space Strategies (GOSS), prepared by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action, delivers on one of the tasks within the enabling action 'modernise legislation, standards and guidelines' set out in Open Space for Everyone – Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne (2021). It guides public open space managers in preparing local open space strategies to protect, optimise, and grow open space networks. The plan recommends including definitions of accessible and restricted or unencumbered open space to ensure they are not left exposed to adopting unsuitable land as a POS contribution.

The plan also highlights that the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), which is accountable for the management of infrastructure contributions, including POS contributions, is currently reviewing the infrastructure contributions system to create a fairer system for property developers to contribute funding for local infrastructure, parks and services.

Open Space for Everyone - Open Space Strategy for Metropolitan Melbourne 2021

The metropolitan strategy focuses on improving access to and the quality of open spaces across Melbourne. While it is not applicable to the Warrnambool context, it has been included for consideration for how the metropolitan regions are considering open space.

Open Space for Everyone understands that open space is integral to the continuation of Melbourne as one of the world's most liveable cities. The strategy notes a range of benefits of open space, including:

- Improved community health and wellbeing
- Healthier Biodiversity
- Enhanced Climate Change Resilience
- Maximised Economic Benefits

Open Space for Everyone does not specify set locations of open space but understands the interconnected nature of a successful open space network. It is based on a range of principles, including fairness and equity, ensuring that everyone has "appropriate access to and use of a wide range of high-quality open spaces" (p.31).

Plan for Victoria, 2025

The plan is committed to carefully planning and preserving land for farming, agriculture and open space, including parks, reserves and other green public areas. The plan has a list of actions for delivery by the State Government.

The plan defines open space as land that provides outdoor recreation, leisure and/or environmental benefits and/or visual amenity, including parks, gardens, recreation reserves, nature reserves, town squares, land along rail lines and around stations and green areas at schools. It is noteworthy that this definition allows for a more expansive group of land categories to be considered open space by comparison with the definition included in the Subdivision Act.

Action 13 commits to the introduction of minimum standards and guidance for open space in established urban areas, with the goal of amending the Victoria Planning Provisions in the short term. That is, amending planning schemes to specify the types of open space that should be close to homes in established urban areas. Planning controls for activity centres and precincts will also be introduced to facilitate the setting of an open space requirement. The plan will also support initiatives for the shared use of open space at school grounds after hours.

2.2 Regional planning

There are several regional plans that refer to public open space for the southwestern region of Victoria.

Great South Coast Regional Growth Plan, 2014

This plan was developed some time ago. The plan provides broad direction for land use and development in the region, and a more detailed planning framework for the region of Warrnambool. It depicts Warrnambool as the key hub for major growth within a connected network of cities and townships in the southwest.

In relation to open space, the plan recommends that open space is provided in urban growth areas on the outskirts of Warrnambool and that open space be designed to serve multiple uses. The plan also emphasises that there needs to be recognition that the role of open spaces can and should change with time, as demographics in the area change.

Great Ocean Road Regional Trails Strategy 2025 – 2035

This Strategy was produced by the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority to guide the development and management of an integrated network of trails from Torquay to Port Fairy. In the Warrnambool area, the Strategy highlights the Foreshore Promenade and the Warrnambool to Port Fairy Rail Trail as key trails to be improved and promoted to encourage longer stays and boost local economies.

Eastern Maar Country Plan (2015)

This plan articulates the Eastern Maar Peoples' vision for a future grounded in cultural identity, environmental stewardship, and community wellbeing. It outlines goals across land management, education, governance, and economic development. Key actions include establishing ranger programs, protecting cultural heritage, and pursuing co-management and decision-making authority of public lands in partnership with governments and agencies.

Barwon South West Regional Trails Master Plan (2009)

This plan aims to establish a detailed master plan for the development of existing and proposed regional trails throughout the Barwon South West Region, comprising nine local government authorities, including the Warrnambool City Council.

This plan presents a regional vision to enhance trail connectivity across southwest Victoria, supporting active transport, tourism, and local health outcomes. It identifies priority trail projects and proposes a consistent design standard, interpretation signage, and environmental management practices.

2.3 Local Policy

The key policy considerations for open space contributions are Council's long-term vision for public open space, and specific directions and actions that are outlined in Council's Open Space Strategy and associated capital works programs.

Warrnambool Council Plan (2025-2029)

This plan is a legislative document that is prepared every four years, following local government elections, and reviewed annually as part of the budget process. It identifies five key strategies and the measures to achieve them, including priorities for services, wellbeing, infrastructure, amenities, and business support.

Warrnambool 2040

The Warrnambool 2040, finalised in 2025, outlines the community vision. It describes that, by 2040, Warrnambool's vast network of open space is valued, protected and enhanced and is recognised as vitally important for Warrnambool's residents and visitors.

Warrnambool Futures – long term land use plan

The Strategy is currently being developed. This city-wide strategic land use plan will set a broad, integrated vision for the municipality to manage where and how future growth and development will take place. The Plan will address key issues such as employment, tourism, housing supply, infrastructure provision and environmental challenges holistically and strategically, in consultation with the communities of Warrnambool.

The Open Space Strategy should inform infrastructure provision possibilities in the Warrnambool Future Plan ahead of its scheduled completion in mid-2026.

Asset Management Policy (2024)

This policy provides a framework for the sustainable management of Council's infrastructure assets. The policy ensures Council services are supported by well-documented and sustainably managed assets, with clear roles and responsibilities, effective risk management, compliance with regulations, and consideration of environmental impacts, including climate change. It promotes cross-department coordination and long-term financial planning to ensure infrastructure continues to meet community needs efficiently and responsibly. Open space is a key asset to which this policy is applied.

Healthy Warrnambool Plan (2025-2029)

The Healthy Warrnambool Plan 2025-2029 outlines the city's principal health priorities and initiatives that will be implemented over the next four years, in alignment with the Victorian Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2027. Ensuring adequate access to open space addresses key health priorities, contributing to improved livability, increased physical activity, and enhanced resilience against the impacts of climate change.

Active Warrnambool Strategy (2025-2035)

The Active Warrnambool Strategy offers the Warrnambool City Council a research-driven framework for planning, delivering, and managing sports and active recreation opportunities over the next ten years. It addresses demographic shifts, participation patterns, areas of population growth, and community aspirations to ensure that facilities and programs are inclusive, accessible, and sustainable. Guided by its core principles, the strategy strives to provide facilities and programs in convenient, easily accessible locations, offer a variety of activities that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of the community, and design facilities that are inclusive, safe, and accessible for everyone.

Open Space Strategy 2014 (currently under review)

The 2014 Warrnambool Open Space Strategy aimed to establish a comprehensive framework to guide the planning and management of open space through to 2026. An internal Council review in 2024 found that there is a relatively high amount of public open space per resident, but that several issues exist. The strategy divided the municipality into 12 precincts and addressed the following attributes of each:

- Quantity – meet or exceed industry standards.
- Classifications – open space is classified by hierarchy (local, neighbourhood, municipal, regional). Across each of the hierarchy there are no size or accessibility standards.
- Accessibility – the accessibility standards is "Neighbourhood or above open space within 500 metres or local open space within 300 metres of 95% of properties in residential areas and an off-road trail within one kilometre of 95% of properties in residential areas."
- Functions of open space – Thirteen functions of open space are defined, including uses such as waterways, drainage and utility which are on encumbered land.
- Implementation – the Strategy included a range of recommendations. Of these, 11 have been completed, 25 are in progress, and 17 are pending (yet to start).

Sustainable Subdivisions Framework 2025

This is a voluntary framework that intends to see subdivision applications resulting in more sustainable design outcomes. Warrnambool City Council is one of the seven councils that share a Sustainable Subdivisions Advisor to advocate for more sustainable development outcomes in greenfield subdivisions. The framework describes that existing vegetation should be retained in new subdivision areas as much as possible and emphasizes the community and environmental benefits of public open space that is accessible by sustainable transport modes. The framework does not provide direction on collecting levies for subdivisions.

2.4 Contribution rates in other local government areas

Table 5 and Table 6 provide an overview of open space contribution rates in council areas across metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria, respectively. The purpose of this inclusion is not to use these rates as a benchmark, but rather to consider whether the proposed rate for the City of Warrnambool is generally aligned with other similar areas.

While the contribution rates vary across councils, the general municipal-wide contribution rates gazetted over the last three years range from 5% to 8.68% in Metropolitan Melbourne, and 1% to 10% in regional Victoria.

Table 5. Schedule to Clause 53.01 in Metropolitan local government areas (as of October 2025)

Planning Scheme	Public open space contribution rate via Clause 53.01	
Merri-bek (2025)	All areas (Pending planning Authority decision at the time of writing this report)	8.68%
Darebin (2025)	The subdivision of land that creates 5 or more additional lots	5%
	Preston Market Precinct (excluding 30A Cramer Street Preston, and 102 St Georges Road Preston)	10%
Yarra (2024)	All other land * This does not apply to land in DPO5, DPO11 or DPO16	8.65%
Glen Eira (2023)	All subdivisions with the exception of Caulfield Village and the area generally south of Griffith Avenue and south of the existing electricity substation	8.3%
Monash (2023)	All other land *This does not apply to Land shown as CDZ2 on the planning scheme maps (PMP Printing Precinct Comprehensive Development Plan, June 2021)	7.61%
Greater Dandenong (2023)	Any subdivision of land or building intended to be used for residential purpose, except in areas specified in PS	6.3%
	Any subdivision of land or building intended to be used for industrial and/or commercial purpose, except in areas specified in PS	2%
Merri-bek (2022)	Various rates across suburbs	2.5% to 6.5%
Port Phillip (2018)	All land in the municipality	5%
	Fishermans Bend Urban Renewal Area	8%
Maribyrnong (2018)	Subdivisions of 10 lots or greater	5.7% where provided as a percentage of the site value of the land 5.7% or greater to the satisfaction of Council where provided as land
	All other land	5.7%
Moonee Valley (2018)	Subdivisions of 10 lots or greater	5% where provided as a percentage of the site value of the land 5% or greater to the satisfaction of Council where provided as land
	All other land	5%
Stonnington (2018)	Any subdivision in the suburb of Glen Iris, Malvern, Malvern East, Toorak and Kooyong	5%
	Any subdivision in the suburb of Armadale, Prahran, Windsor and South Yarra	8%
	Any subdivision of land situated at 590 Orrong Road & 4 Osment Street, Armadale (being Lot 1 TP 85387F, Vol 10279, Folio 503, Lot 1 TP079481Y, Vol 10279, Folio 505, Lot 1 TP079463B, Folio 500, Lot 1 TP085381T, Vol 10279, Folio 504, Lot 1 TP085377J, Vol 10279, Folio 497, Lot 1 TP079479K, Vol 10279, Folio 501 and Lot 1 TP805167, Vol 9917, Folio 065(("the Land")	8%

Table 6. Schedule to Clause 53.01 in Regional local government areas (as of October 2025)

Planning Scheme	Public open space contribution rate via Clause 53.01	
Baw Baw (2025)	Land shown as a Residential Zone, Commercial Zone or Industrial Zone in Drouin, Longwarry, Trafalgar, Warragul and Yarragon	7.4%
	All other land	2.3%
Greater Geelong (2025)	Waurn Ponds Creek Environs Subdivision	10%
	Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area	10% (unencumbered)
	The subdivision of land zoned for residential purposes	1 additional lot – none 2 to 9 additional lots – 1% per additional lot, up to a maximum of 5% 10 or more lots on land zoned for residential purposes prior to August 31st 2007 – 5% 10 or more lots on land zoned for residential purposes after August 31st 2007 – 10%
	Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area – North East Industrial Precinct	3.1% (unencumbered)
	Land shown as CDZ4 on the planning scheme	10% (unencumbered)
Mansfield (2024)	Yet to be gazetted Residential subdivision	2-4 lots: 5% in line with the Subdivision Act, 1988 5-9 lots: 6% 10+ lots: 7.5%
	Yet to be gazetted Mixed Use, Commercial or Industrial	5%, in accordance with the Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines, prepared by the Growth Areas Authority.
Greater Bendigo (2023)	Residential subdivisions within the locality of Bendigo	2%
	All other residential subdivisions	5%
Campaspe (2023)	Subdivision of land within the General Residential Zone	5%
	Land within the Echuca West precinct Urban Growth Zone (Schedule 1)	9.36%



3. Open space contributions method

3.1 Public Open Space Contributions

In the absence of State Government guidance, a variety of methods for apportioning open space network costs across development have been applied by Victorian municipalities. These methodologies can be distinguished as four development contribution types, as summarised in Figure 1. Each development contribution type has its own justification and principles for fair apportionment.

The 'inclusionary requirements' approach, where development is expected to incorporate on-site, or pay for equivalent off-site provision, certain amenities or features (such as car parking, water sensitive urban design, renewable power generation, etc.), is identified as the most suitable contribution framework for collecting open space contributions in the City of Warrnambool.

Figure 1. Types of development contributions

USER PAYS CONTRIBUTIONS FOR OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE	IMPACT MITIGATION	VALUE SHARING	INCLUSIONARY REQUIREMENTS / DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS
APPORTIONMENT PRINCIPLE Proponents pay according to share of usage of planned infrastructure	**APPORTIONMENT PRINCIPLE** Proponents are responsible for 100% of the cost of making good unanticipated off-site effects, including infrastructure impacts	**APPORTIONMENT PRINCIPLE** Proponents are required to share part of the uplift in land value occasioned by re-zoning or granting of a development approval	**APPORTIONMENT PRINCIPLE** Proponents must meet certain development standards on site or pay for these to be satisfied off-site
EXAMPLES Development Contribution Plans (DCPs) and Infrastucture Charges Plans (ICPs) for local infrastructure including roads, open space, recreation facilities and community facilities	**EXAMPLES** 'Make good' conditions in planning permits, determined on a case by case basis	**EXAMPLES** AmC270 Melbourne Planning Scheme The Growth Area Infrastructure Charge (GAIC) Rezoning conditions	**EXAMPLES** Parking requirements and cash in lieu schemes Open space requirements and cash in lieu schemes Affordable housing contributions

Source: SGS Economics and Planning

Inclusionary provisions

Inclusionary provisions are based on minimum acceptable development standards. The acceptable standard (whether it be open space or other amenities, as noted) may be provided off-site through a cash or in-kind contribution. By way of example, cash-in-lieu schemes have been operating for decades to fulfil car parking requirements.

Cash payments in lieu of provision of 5% (or more) of land for public open space upon subdivision approval is another example of the 'inclusionary standards' premise for requiring cash or in-kind contributions from a development proponent.

Under the inclusionary provisions approach, development is expected to provide sufficient open space to meet the demand generated by that development when considered as part of its host Planning Unit. In this way, successive developments will ultimately generate sufficient open space to meet the needs of the planned community. This differs from a User Pays model, such as a DCP, where contributions from successive developments are linked to the share of usage of new open space assets. This could mean that development occurring relatively late in the build-out cycle will make a lesser contribution per dwelling or equivalent compared to earlier development.

3.2 Appropriateness of the inclusionary provisions framework

The inclusionary requirements approach is founded on the principle that all development must provide or help pay for open space offering appropriate service levels. It is intended to ensure equitable access to open space across the whole municipality over time. Expressed another way, each successive unit of development should bring with it the resources required to supply the open space services it requires.

The inclusionary requirements approach itself may be applied in a variety of ways. The public open space contribution may be fixed having regard to a planned program of acquisition and works, or it can be determined by reference to a provisioning standard, which is a rate of public open space availability per capita.

The application of the inclusionary approach does not burden future development with the responsibility of overcoming pre-existing undersupplies in open space. It is not a means of catching up on inadequate open space provision that may have happened previously. Instead, it focuses on ensuring that all future development contributes to open space provision and helps meet a designated standard or service level of open space across the municipality. This means that future cumulative development will meet its open space requirement and will not exacerbate any pre-existing shortage of open space services into the long term. If development does not contribute to a designated provision standard, the municipality can be expected to be underserviced in the future.

To reiterate, cost apportionment under the inclusionary provision framework is fundamentally different from the user-pays framework. This is because each development project must equip itself with its required quantum of open space according to the adopted planning standard rather than make a contribution based on share of usage of planned assets.

The preferred approach

As noted above, there are a variety of ways that inclusionary provisions can be applied, either through a fixed program of works or a standards-based approach.

A standards-based approach is the SGS preferred method as it avoids the fraught issue of determining a long-term public open space acquisition and capital works program in the absence of funding certainty and changing community needs.

In developing a standards-based approach, the open space contribution expected for each successive unit of development is calculated on a whole planning unit basis. Within a metropolitan area, it is appropriate to treat an entire LGA as a single uniform planning unit. LGAs with regional and rural areas are still treated as a single planning unit, but their population density is non-uniform, which should be accounted for.

The City of Warrnambool is a non-uniform planning unit. People living in the LGA's low density areas will make use of local open space facilities and private open space within their properties, but as they are all located relatively close by to urban areas (generally within a 10-minute drive), it is anticipated that they will also use open space facilities located in urban areas (e.g. for organised sports).

To determine the land/equivalent cash contribution rate for the LGA to supply the amount of open space required to meet the 30sqm/capita standard (see Section 3.3) for the population based on dwelling capacity, the required open space is expressed as a percentage of all the LGA's NDA. Including developable land from low density areas into the LGA NDA has the effect of diluting the average population density, leading to an unrealistically low contribution rate.

To account for this effect, low density areas are quarantined for the calculation process. A contribution rate is calculated for those parts of the LGA which are developable at standard densities and this is then adjusted for application to low density and rural living areas (without this adjustment low density areas would pay more on account of their larger lot sizes). The result is that, on a per-dwelling basis, POS contributions are roughly equal across households regardless of whether they live in a standard-density or low-density area.

The standards-based approach follows the methodology below. This is further discussed throughout the report.

Method in the delivery of a standards-based approach

1. Decide on the Planning Unit and the population to be served by the open space network at the dwelling capacity

2. Calculate the Net developable Area (NDA) based on the appropriate land uses. If relevant, identify very low density and rural residential areas and their projected share of future population.

3. For the adopted Planning Unit, estimate the total amount of open space required to meet the needs of the Unit at the adopted dwelling capacity with reference to a provision standard for this infrastructure (30sqm per capita). If relevant, split the planning unit into standard density areas and low density areas.

4. Express the quantum of open space indicated at step (3) as a percentage of the aggregate area of all notionally developable lots in the Planning Unit, including:
   - all lots at dwelling capacity.
   - the quantum of existing POS (this honours the principle that the future POS requirement should be taken from the full pool of land available for development before the deduction of parkland and related requirements).
   - If relevant, calculate the land contribution rate applicable to the parts of the Planning Unit that accommodate standard density development.

5. Set the low density/ rural residential rate to achieve comparable $ value contributions per dwelling as in areas of standard density development.

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2025

3.3 Open space provision standards – 30sqm

Setting provision standards is a crucial step in the inclusionary requirements approach. Open space planning standards help identify the designated standard of open space services required in an area. Sufficiency standards are commonly used to assess the required provision of a range of community infrastructure, such as childcare centres, hospitals, schools and libraries. Standards typically use a per capita or per household rate of provision.

Open space is no different from other community infrastructure in that its provision should be determined based on a sufficiency standard.

In relation to open space planning, open space provision and service levels are a combination of the quantity, proximity, and quality of open space. For the purposes of a public open space contributions policy, the quantum of open space per capita (30sqm per capita) is used as a standard for the quantum of open space services required by residents. The type of open space, its location and level of development should then be determined through further open space planning assessments.

It should be noted that the 30 sqm/capita quantum standard is used solely to generate an appropriate contribution rate at the Planning Unit (municipal wide) level. It is not, by itself, prescriptive of how the open space needs of any particular suburb, neighbourhood or town ought to be met.

The standard of 30 sqm/capita is a proxy for sufficiency of open space services available to the municipal community. The flow of recreational services available from a given network of open space will be determined not only by the quantum of land available for this purpose, but the level of its development (for example, the extent of development to host organised sports). Within reasonable limits, a smaller quantum of public open space may deliver the same flow of recreational services as a larger quantum of land if developed to a higher level. Meanwhile, adequate availability of open space in terms of meterage per capita need not signify an adequate level of recreational services, if the land in question is under-developed.

The funds generated from a contribution rate premised on a quantum standard of 30 sqm/capita (and the land values that attach to this) could be used to:
- acquire more land in areas lacking convenient access to public open space; and/or
- redevelop existing open space in such areas so that the level of open space service provision is adequate; and/or
- develop existing open space assets in areas where adequate land is available but where community needs remain unmet because these assets lack infrastructure and facilities.

Where a municipality has an adequate distribution of open space and sufficient land to meet or even exceed the quantum generated by the 30 sqm/capita rate, the use of this standard may nonetheless be warranted given that these land assets must be continuously developed to meet community recreational needs.

Similarly, the use of the 30 sqm/capita standard for the calculation of development contributions will be justified even in those municipalities where the need for additional land may be indicated but where opportunities to acquire such assets are highly constrained or entirely absent, such as in the case of some inner metropolitan suburbs. In these circumstances, the proceeds of the contribution would be applied to lift the flow of recreational services from the constrained stock of public open space, so that it operates at superior capacity.

There are no adopted state government open space provision standards. The Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) Guidelines call for 10% of net developable area for active and passive open space in growth areas. The 10% rate has not changed for some time. At an average greenfield density of 15 dwellings per hectare, as was common at the time for standard development, the 10% public open space requirement translated to approximately 27sqm per capita. While the standard has not changed, the density of PSPs has increased, with a current average density of 20 dwellings per hectare. At this level, public open space provision would reduce to 20sqm per capita, assuming the same average household size.

Historically, the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW) proposed a planning standard of 7.5 acres of open space for every 1,000 people, which translates to 30sqm per capita. This standard was incorporated into the Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Scheme in 1954.[4]

Until recently, open space provision in metropolitan Melbourne aligned with a 30sqm per capita standard. The VPA Metropolitan Open Space Network[5] report states that in 2017, the total metropolitan stock of open space was 23,723ha. This included Crown land, State land, Local Government land, and Public Authority land. It further states that local government owned some 12,719 ha, or 54%, of the total pool of open space across the metropolis. Local government-owned land is the best proxy for local parkland and playing fields in the VPA data. The VPA report also notes that the total open space provision per capita across the metropolitan area was 57.7sqm. 54% of this, or 30.9sqm per capita, can therefore be taken as an estimate of Council POS provision.

Furthermore, several metropolitan Melbourne councils have adopted provision standards that align with 30sqm per capita for the development of open space strategies.[6]

Feedback from Planning Panels Victoria through Monash Amendment C148 indicates a 30sqm standard should be supported by an implementation plan or program of works. SGS agrees with this. The open space standard of 30 sqm specifies the quantity of open space to be provided for calculating financial contributions. The deployment of the funds, however, should be guided by an open space strategy and a supporting capital works plan.

In some cases, acquiring land may not be possible or desirable. In this case, funds will need to be spent on improving access and the carrying capacity of existing open space to enable increased utilisation (e.g. hours of operation through lighting/alternative surfaces, improving the quality of infrastructure).



4 *Spiller M and Noesgaard J (2024) Public open space contributions in Victoria: A preferred approach, SGS Economics and Planning, accessed 3 April 2025. https://sgsep.com.au/assets/main/Public-Open-Space-in-Victoria_A-preferred-approach.pdf*

5 *VPA, 2017, Metropolitan Open Space Network: Provision and Distribution*

6 *Monash Open Space Strategy 2018 (30sqm moderate supply), Cardinia Open Space Strategy 2023-33 (50sqm), Frankston City Open Space Strategy 2016-36 (30.3sqm), Darebin Open Space Strategy 2019 (30sqm), Draft Mornington Peninsula Open Space Strategy 2025-40 (30sqm)*

4. Population and housing capacity

The following section provides an overview of the population and housing capacity for the City of Warrnambool.

4.1 Population and dwelling forecasts

To understand the future requirements for open space, the forecast population and dwelling capacity of the municipality are required. The current population and dwelling forecast, Victoria in Future 2023 (VIF2023) is limited to the year 2036. In addition, the forecast does not account for the population increase from the State's Plan for Victoria Housing Targets announced in 2024.

Table 7. Population projection for the City of Warrnambool

Warrnambool (C)	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	2051
Victoria in Future (VIF, 2023)	35,433	35,350	37,441	38,581			

Source: Victoria in Future (VIF) population and household projections

The purpose of the Victorian Government Housing Targets is to articulate the proportion of additional housing required across each of the local government areas to reach the 2.24 million new homes needed across Victoria.

While the housing targets are set to 2051, they are inherently targets and are used to ensure there is adequate dwelling capacity within each local government area to reach the set targets. As noted by the State Government, "the targets will ensure that every planning scheme identifies enough realistic opportunities for new development to deliver the targeted number of homes".[7]

In the delivery of the housing targets, it is important that these areas plan for adequate essential infrastructure, including open space. Given this, for the purposes of understanding the open space contribution rate for the City of Warrnambool, the housing targets have been used to articulate the forecast dwelling capacity within the city.

The Victorian Government has set housing targets for the City of Warrnambool for an additional 7,200 new dwellings. As noted in Table 8, based on the number of dwellings in 2026, this will result in a total capacity of 24,273 dwellings across the City.



7 State Government, Housing Targets: https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/planforvictoria/housing-for-all- victorians/housing-targets

Table 8. Current dwellings and population vs housing capacity

	2026*	Capacity with Housing Targets
Dwelling capacity	17,073	24,273[a]
Population	36,420	50,282[#]

*Source: SGS Economics and Planning, *SGS SAM24 #based on forecast dwellings and SGS SAM24 2056 forecast household size. a Based on State Government Housing Targets*

Based on dwelling capacity and a forecast household size, these dwellings could accommodate 50,282 people.
This population capacity has been developed based on the adopted forecast household size of 2.07 people per dwelling. As noted in Table 9, this figure is slightly lower than both the forecast metropolitan average and the regional Victorian average household size. The declining household size is a continuation of a past trend in the Local Government Area (LGA).

Table 9. Average household size in Warrnambool, Regional Victoria and Greater Melbourne based on Occupied Dwellings

Average Household Size	2026	2056
City of Warrnambool	2.30	2.07
Regional Victoria	2.34	2.26
Greater Melbourne	2.60	2.52

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, SAM24 Occupied Private Dwellings

4.2 Demographics

In 2021, the City of Warrnambool had a median age of 42 years, 1 year younger than the Regional Victorian average of 43 years.[8] Analysis of the service age groups of in the City of Warrnambool in 2021, compared to Regional VIC, shows a similar proportion of people in the younger age groups (0 to 17 years) and a slightly lower proportion in the older age groups (65+ years). Overall, 21.3% of the population was aged 0-17, and 20.8% were aged 65 years and over, compared with 21.2% and 21.8% respectively for Regional VIC.[9]

However, the future forecast for the city, as noted in Table 10, shows a declining share of the population in the school-age and working-age cohorts, while the share of retirees will be increasing.[10] This is on par with regional Victorian trends.

Table 10. Population distribution by age group for 2026 and 2056

	City of Warrnambool			Regional Victoria		
	2026	2056	Change	2026	2056	Change
School-age (0-17)	20.0%	16.9%	-3.0%	20.4%	17.6%	-2.7%
Working age (18-65)	55.8%	50.7%	-5.1%	54.8%	51.6%	-3.2%
Retirees (65+)	24.2%	32.3%	+8.1%	24.8%	30.7%	+5.9%

Source: SGS Small Area Model (SAM), 2024

8 *ID. FORECAST BASED OF 2021 ABC CENSUS DATA, COMMUNITY PROFILE – POPULATION HIGHLIGHTS, ACCESSED ON 22 OCTOBER, 2025 HTTPS://PROFILE.ID.COM.AU/WARRNAMBOOL/HIGHLIGHTS*

9 *SGS ECONOMICS AND PLANNING, SAM24, POPULATION PROJECTIONS*

10 *IDEM*

4.3 Warrnambool City workforce

Table 11 outlines the current and projected job market for the City of Warrnambool across four Broad Industry Categories (see Appendix A).

In 2026, it is estimated that the leading employment sector will be Population Services (such as retail, entertainment and other personal services), accounting for 37% of total employment, followed by Health and Education, accounting for 30%. Both sectors are expected to maintain their strong presence in the job market, with Population Services growing by 9% at an average annual rate of 0.3%, and Health and Education growing by 11% at an average annual rate of 0.4%. This will result in an additional 1,646 job opportunities by 2056.

The Traditional Industrial sector is expected to increase at a lower average annual growth rate of 0.1% to 2056, and the Knowledge Services sector, although forecasted to grow, is expected to maintain a similar market share.

Table 11. Employment Forecast in Warrnambool City by the Broad Industry Category by 2056

Industry category	2026	2026 Market Share	2056	2056 Market Share	Job Increase 26-56	Job Growth 26-56	AAGR 26-56
Health and Education	6,079	30%	6,751	31.2%	672	+11%	+0.4%
Knowledge Services	3,578	18%	3,852	17.8%	275	+8%	+0.2%
Population Services	7,444	37%	8,081	37.4%	637	+9%	+0.3%
Traditional Industrial	2,883	14%	2,945	13.6%	62	2%	+0.1%
Total	**19,984**		**21,630**		**1,646**	**+8%**	**+0.3%**

Source: SGS Small Area Model (SAM), 2024

4.4 Summary and implications for open space contributions

The number of dwellings in the City of Warrnambool will continue to increase, as will businesses and industries. In doing so, it is important that these dwellings and business establishments contribute to essential infrastructure, including open space. The City of Warrnambool's future will see significantly expanded demand for high-quality, diverse public open spaces.

With the increase in the number of older adults, it will be critical that these spaces are accessible and located within a walkable catchment area for residential dwellings.

Workers are also a key component of the City of Warrnambool community. Employment is expected to increase modestly across the city. Integrating open spaces within employment areas ensures that workers can enjoy the benefits of open space. Additionally, this integration enables employment precincts to capitalise on the economic and environmental benefits that open spaces offer.



5. Current state of open space in the City of Warrnambool

The following section provides an overview of the current state of open space in the City of Warrnambool. This considers quantity, quality and accessibility of open space. This is important in the consideration of where new and improved open spaces should be prioritised.

5.1 Quantity

There is currently 361.9ha of publicly accessible open space across the municipality which is forecast to increase to 410.4ha by 2046 based on planned new open space.[11] When the SGS open space standard of 30sqm is applied across the catchment, based on the current population and forecast population by 2046,, there is an adequate supply of public open space If no additional open space is delivered following 2046, based on dwelling capacity and population of 50,282 the city will have 81.7sqm per capita.

Note, however, that exceedance of the land per capita standard does not mean the City of Warrnambool has adequate levels of open space service for its population. Adequacy in terms of service levels also requires attention to the accessibility and quality of the land dedicated to public open space, as well as the alignment between the development of open space and contemporary demographic needs.

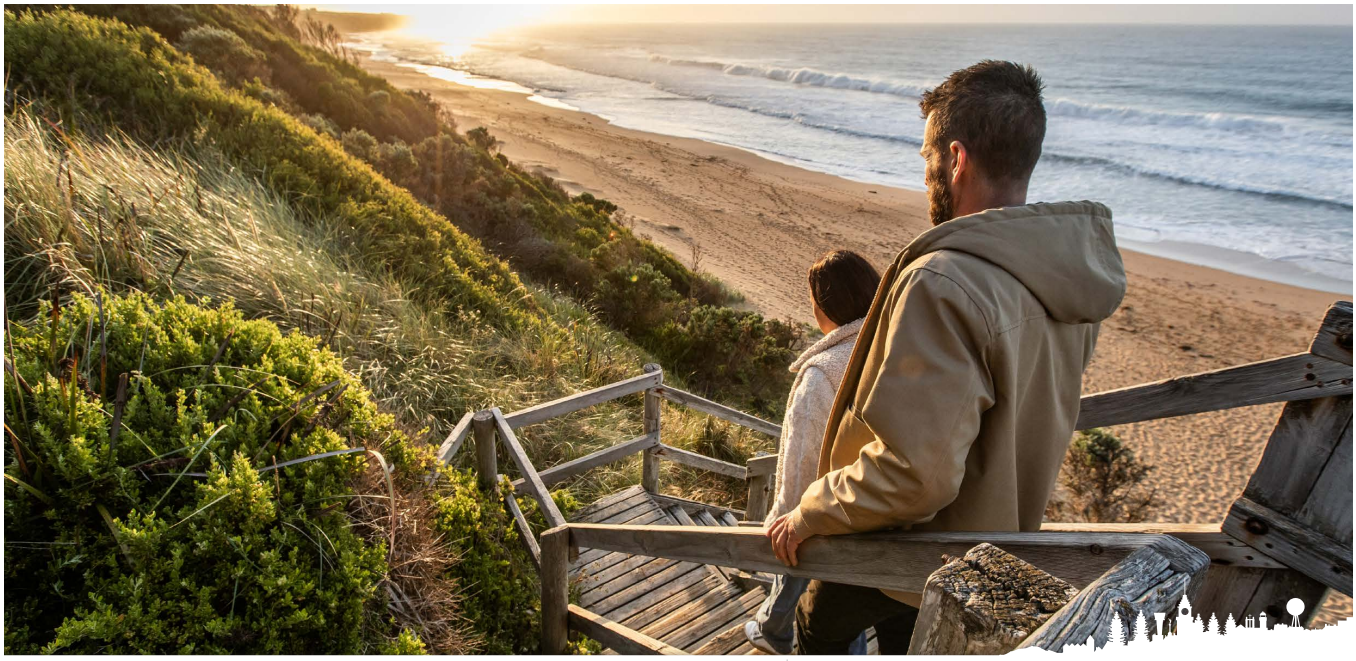
Table 12. Quantity of Open Space across Warrnambool City Council

Quantity of open space		Population		Open space sqm per capita	
2026	2046	2026	2046	2026	2046
361.9	410.4	36,350	44,736	100	91.7

5.2 Accessibility

Based on industry standards such as the Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines, open space should be located within a safe walkable distance of 400m of 95% of all residential dwellings. Based on accessibility across the municipality, approximately 72% of urban dwellings are within 400m of open space.

In an urban setting, residents should have access to open space within a 400-metre walking distance of their homes. However, in some rural settings, this requirement may not apply due to lower dwelling density and increased access to private open space.



The key urban areas with poor accessibility, where most dwellings are located outside the 400-meter catchment area for open spaces, are primarily the new growth areas such as Dennington and South East Hopkins.

When applying the 400m walkability catchment to commercial and industrial areas, approximately 46% of employment areas are within a 400m walking catchment from open space. Key gaps in the network include the South precinct, the central business district and the industrial estate in the North East.[12]

Higher order open spaces (district and regional) are destination spaces. This means that generally, people will drive to access this open space. When applying the accessibility standards for a 10-minute drive to a district open space and a 20-minute drive to a regional open space, all residential dwellings are within access.[13]

5.3 Quality

Warrnambool City Council is currently undertaking an asset condition review, and no data has been provided at the time of writing. However, observations from the Open Space Strategy work, which includes multiple site visits and consultations with the technical team and the community, indicate that generally, the quality of open space in Warrnambool is variable across the LGA. Certain spaces lack a defined function, and others lack proper landscaping and public furniture.

5.4 Summary and implications for open space contributions

The City of Warrnambool currently has a large supply of public open space however it is not well located with large areas not meeting the accessibility standards.

Of the existing open space, the quality of open space is variable and further investment will be needed to accommodate the changing demographics of the population and the city's expanding footprint.



12 *THE BUILDING FOOTPRINT DATA ASSESSED AGAINST THE ACCESSIBILITY CATCHMENTS IS FROM 2019 AND THEREFORE DOES NOT CAPTURE THE GROWTH THAT OCCURRED SINCE.*

13 *SGS HAS NOT APPLIED THE STATE GOVERNMENT PSP GUIDELINE THAT HOUSEHOLDS SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO AN ACTIVE OPEN SPACE WITHIN ONE KILOMETRE OF 95% OF ALL DWELLINGS. THIS STANDARD IS MORE APPROPRIATE IN A METROPOLITAN SETTING.*

6. Net Developable Area

6.1 Calculating the Net Developable Area

The Net Developable Area (NDA) is the land available for development within a nominated Planning Unit. NDA is a commonly used metric throughout planning, including in developing Precinct Structure Plans (PSPs) when considering community infrastructure and open space.

When calculating NDA land, it is conventional to exclude the following: encumbered land (waterways, conservation land, flood-prone land), arterial roads, railway corridors, significant heritage, schools and community facilities.

For the purposes of this assessment, the NDA of the City of Warrnambool has been calculated through an analysis of land use zones. As per the above definition, relevant land zoned for residential and employment purposes has been included. In addition, consistent with PSP practice, the road network comprising of local roads, principal roads and significant municipal roads have all been included in the NDA calculation. Lastly, the existing public open space land has been included in the assessment. This ensures that the future open space contribution rate is not influenced by past contribution shortfalls (if they have occurred). Rather, the NDA considers the municipality as if it were 'blank' with no development.

This approach provides a robust understanding of the total land area across the adopted Planning Unit for the development of future residential or employment uses throughout the life of the municipality.

6.2 Net Developable Area for the City of Warrnambool

Included in the NDA for the open space contribution are lands suitable for development, whether residential, commercial, or industrial. Also included in the NDA are three areas that are not currently zoned for development, but that soon will be:

- Land within the North Dennington Structure Plan area;
- Land within the Eastern Activity Centre Precinct; and
- Land within the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan area (Amendment C217warr currently in consultation).

The specific zones included in the NDA are outlined in Table 13.

Table 13. Zones included in the Net Developable Area calculation

Zone Code	Zone Description
C1Z	Commercial 1 Zone
C2Z	Commercial 2 Zone
GRZ1	General Residential Zone - Schedule 1
LRDZ	Low Density Residential Zone
IN1Z	Industrial 1 Zone
IN3Z	Industrial 3 Zone
MUZ	Mixed Use Zone
MUZ1	Mixed Use Zone
MUZ2	Mixed Use Zone
MUZ3	Mixed Use Zone
NRZ1	Neighbourhood Residential Zone - Schedule 1
PPRZ	Public Park and Recreation Zone
RLZ	Rural Living Zone
TZ	Township Zone

Table 14 outlines the zones excluded from the Net Developable Area calculation. These areas either have no or limited future residential or employment development, or very specialised developments that are assumed to have limited future growth or limited public open space triggers.

Table 14. Zones excluded from the Net Developable Area calculation

Zone Code	Zone Description	Rationale
FZ	Farming Zone	Prioritises agricultural land use and aims to restrict non-agricultural uses, including residential development.
PCRZ	Public Conservation and Resource Zone	To protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values. Is not considered public open space and does not allow development to occur.
SUZ1	Special Use Zone - Schedule 1	To allow for the efficient operation of the Warrnambool Racecourse and associated facilities, including the conduct of regular sporting and festival events.
SUZ2	Special Use Zone - Schedule 2	To allow for the efficient operation of the Warrnambool Showgrounds for the enjoyment of the general public, including the conduct of regular festival events.
SUZ3	Special Use Zone - Schedule 3	Serves as a transitional zone between industrial uses and sensitive land uses.
TRZ1	Transport Zone 1 - State Transport Infrastructure	Provides land for transport services and facilities.
TRZ2	Transport Zone 2 - Principal Road Network	
TRZ3	Transport Zone 3 - Significant Municipal Road	
PUZ1	Public Use Zone - Service And Utility	Public land used for community services and facilities – not available for private development. Community/infrastructure uses.
PUZ2	Public Use Zone - Education	
PUZ3	Public Use Zone - Health And Community	
PUZ5	Public Use Zone - Cemetery/Crematorium	
PUZ6	Public Use Zone - Local Government	
PUZ7	Public Use Zone - Other Public Use	
UFZ	Urban Floodway Zone	Applies to mainstream flooding in urban areas where the primary function of the land is to convey active flood flows.

The Net Developable Area included in the calculations is spatially provided in Figure 2. This also includes Land within the North Dennington Structure Plan area, Land within the Eastern Activity Centre Precinct; and Land within the East of Aberline Precinct Structure Plan area (Amendment C217warr currently in consultation).

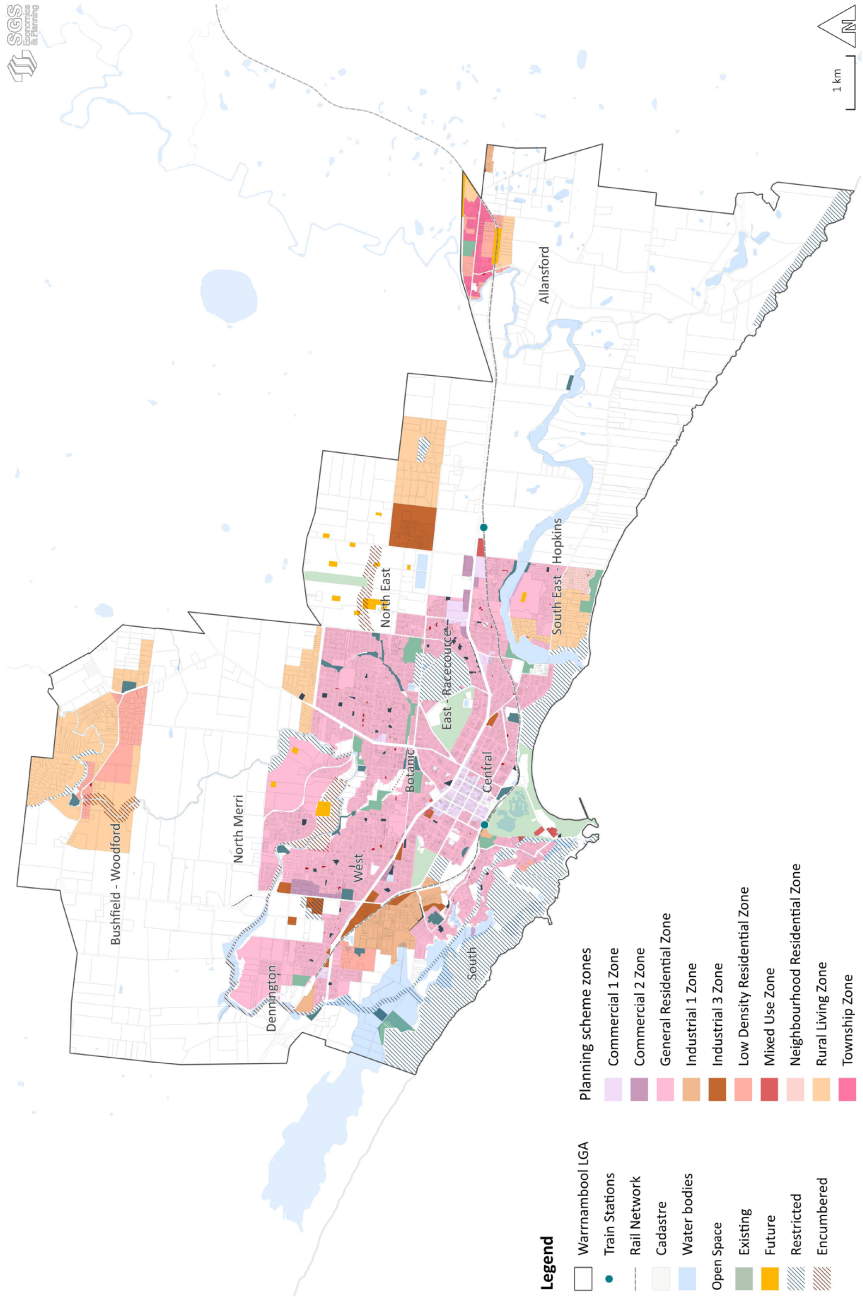


Figure 2. Planning scheme zones in relation to the Net Developable Area calculations

7. Open space contribution

7.1 Contribution for the City of Warrnambool

The open space contribution has been developed through the steps outlined in Table 15. The open space contribution assessment has been undertaken for the standard density areas in the first instance. As noted earlier in this report, those living in low density and rural residential areas should, in principle, be subject to a comparable $ value contribution per dwelling as their counterparts in standard density areas, because they will be accessing the same open space network. Adjusting the standard density rate for differences in site area and land value between standard and low density development translates to a lower contribution rate for development in low density and rural living situations.

Through the application of this method, there is a strong justification for an open space contribution rate of 5.17 % (rounded to 5.2%) for standard density areas and 4.65% (4.7%) for low density and rural living areas.

Table 15. Summary of open space contribution steps

Metric	Warrnambool LGA	Low Density and Rural Living Zones	Standard density area
1. Establish the open space standard	30sqm per capita	30sqm per capita	30sqm per capita
2. Population capacity by at the nominal year (including housing targets)	50,282 people	5,060 people	45,229 people
3. Open Space Required for future population (population x 30sqm)	1,508,670 sqm	151,813 sqm	1,356,856 sqm
4. Net Developable Area (all land that could be developed in the period to the horizon year, plus existing public open space)	36,887,571 sqm	10,638,810	26,248,761
5. Open space contribution requirement from NDA (Open space required nominal population / Net Developable Area)	4.09%	1.43%	5.17%
6. Rate for low density, which adjusts the standard density rate to provide the same cash contribution per dwelling.	-	4.65%	-

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2025

Step 1: Adoption of an appropriate open space standard.

As noted in Section 3.3, a standard of 30sqm per capita has been adopted.

Step 2: Population capacity

The population capacity of the City of Warrnambool is calculated by multiplying the number of dwellings by the number of people that could be accommodated in those dwellings, based on an assumed average household size of 2.07 people per dwelling. Based on the Victorian State Government Housing Targets, the analysis uses a build-out capacity of 24,273 dwellings across the City of Warrnambool and a future resident population of 50,289.

Of the future population capacity, 45,229 will reside within a standard density area and 5,060 will reside within a low density area (Table 16).

Table 16. Population capacity

Catchment	2026	Capacity
Standard Density Areas	32,266 people	45,229 people
Low Density and Rural Living zones	4,151 people	5,060 people
Total population capacity	36,420 people	50,289 people

Source: State Government Housing Targets, 2024, SGS Small Area Model (SAM,02024)

Step 3: Open space required for future population

The open space required to accommodate the needs of the population capacity is calculated by multiplying the population capacity by the open space provision standard (30sqm/capita). This results in a requirement of 1,356,856 sqm (135.6 ha) to meet the needs of the standard density areas' population.

This figure does not suggest that this amount of land must be provided; rather, it is used to understand the contribution rate, which can then be applied to additional land and/or improvements to service standards on newly acquired land and/or embellishments to existing land to increase open space service levels.

Table 17. Quantity of open space needed for the standard density area population

Population capacity in standard density areas	Open Space Standard (sqm per capita)	Open Space requirement (sqm)
45,229	30	1,356,856

Source: SGS Economics and Planning

Step 4: Net Developable Area

As noted in Section 6, the NDA is land that can be developed, including residentially zoned land, employment land, the local road network, and public parks and recreation areas. In the City of Warrnambool, the NDA for standard density areas is 2,625ha.

Table 18. Net Developable Area – Standard density areas

Net Developable Area (ha)
2,624.9

Source: SGS Economics and Planning

Step 5: Open space requirement from Net Developable Area

The contribution rate is calculated as a ratio of the open space requirement at the nominal year from the net developable area. In the case of the City of Warrnambool, this results in a contribution rate of 5.17% for all new development within the standard density area.

Table 19. Open space contribution rate – Standard density areas

Developable land (sqm)	Population capacity	Open Space Bench-mark (sqm per capita)	Open Space require-ment (sqm)	Contribution Rate
26,248,761	45,229	30	1,356,856	5.17%

Source: SGS Economics and Planning

Step 6. Open space contribution adjustment for Low Density Residential and Rural Living Zones

As explained in Section 3.2, an adjustment is applied to the contribution rate determined for the standard density areas to calculate the rate for the low density areas. This adjustment is warranted on the principle that the $value of contributions for open space should be broadly similar on a per dwelling basis, regardless of whether a development is located in a low or standard density area.

The adjustment is calculated taking into account the average square metre value and average lot size of properties in standard density areas and low density areas in the Warrnambool region, as reported by the Victorian Valuer General. With this adjustment, the open space contribution rate is calculated to be 4.65% for low density areas. The value of low density land in the region is typically lower on a per square metre basis compared to standard density areas, but the site areas of low density dwellings are much larger. Taking both these parameters into account the adjustment arrives at percentage of land area in low density areas which generates the same $ value as 5.17% of average land value per dwelling in standard density areas.

For the purposes of this calculation, SGS applied Valuer General data for the wider Warrnambool region rather than just the municipality itself. This was necessary because of the limited number of reported sales for Warrnambool, particularly for low density lots. The calculation is unpacked in the following table. Across the Warrnambool region, comprising the municipalities of Glenelg, Moyne, Warrnambool, Corangamite and Colac-Otway, the average site value per dwelling for standard residential development was $239,061 in 2024. Meanwhile, the average site value per dwelling for low density lots was $265,435. Because the site value for low density lots is greater than for standard density lots, it follows that the contribution rate from these lower density lots should be lower if the goal is to have a $ contribution of broadly the same value across these density types.

The contribution rate for standard residential was established at 5.17% as explained above. The ratio of land value for standard residential to land value for low density residential is 0.9 ($239,061/$265,435). The contribution rate for low density residential is therefore indicated by 5.17% x 0.9 = 4.65%. As shown in the table, application of a contribution rate of 4.65% to the higher valued low density lots would, on average, produce the same contribution per lot as the application of 5.17% to the lower valued standard residential lots ($12,358 per lot or dwelling)

Table 20: Adjustment of standard residential contribution rate to produce an equivalent rate for low density residential

	Average site area (sqm)	Average value per sqm	Average site value per dwelling	POS contribution rate	Nominal contribution per dwelling
Standard res lots	717	333.24	$239,061	5.17%	$12,358
Low density lots	2310	114.89	$265,435	4.65%	$12,358

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, data from Valuer General Victoria

7.2 Application of contribution rate

Existing contribution rates

The contribution rate recommended in this Report considers the entire municipality as a single Planning Unit. It is noted that within the Warrnambool Planning Scheme, there are two site-specific open space contribution rates. These sites have undergone specific analysis to identify a rate that is applicable to individual sites. Given this, the new rate should not replace the specific site-based contribution rates.

Rather, additional rate should be included in the Planning Scheme as follows:

- General Residential, Neighbourhood Residential Zone, Township Zone, Mixed Use Zone, Commercial 1 Zone, Commercial 2 Zone, Industrial 1 Zone, and Industrial 3 Zone not elsewhere covered - 5.17%
- Low Density Residential Zone and Rural Living Zone not elsewhere covered - 4.65%

Types of land

It is appropriate to apply the open space contribution rate across all commercial, industrial, and residential subdivisions within the standard density catchment. While residential land may drive a higher use of open space, employment land and employees should also have adequate access to quality open space to enjoy before, during, and after work hours.

Furthermore, non-residential uses are part of the wider community and should contribute to the infrastructure that supports that community. Industrial, commercial, and retail uses benefit directly and indirectly from quality open space provision.

Given this, the open space contribution rate should be applied across all uses within the identified pool of net developable land. By way of elaboration, this report recognises that Council public open space should be planned primarily with the residential population in mind, as residents will typically be the principal client group for this municipal service.

However, by not differentiating industrial, commercial and retail subdivision from residential subdivision the calculation method also recognises that these non-residential uses have the same requirement for access to Council public open space as residential uses. That is, non-residential uses must be supported with the provision of Council open space in the same way as residential uses are, notwithstanding that the visitation they generate to these assets may vary from their residential counterparts.

To illustrate, a worker in an industrial area may jog around a local sports oval once a week, whilst a local resident may do the same jog 5 times a week. Both require access to this service for their respective factories and homes to be deemed to be in a functional and sustainable neighbourhood. The indivisibilities in Council parkland provision mean that the facilities cannot generally be scaled in line with visitation.

By not differentiating non-residential uses, the calculation method applied in this report also recognises that:

- Industrial, commercial and retail uses are part of the wider Warrnambool community and single planning unit; they benefit from being in a City which is properly equipped with essential infrastructure, including Council public open space and have a responsibility to help provide this infrastructure.
- Except in those situations where land is likely to be permanently reserved for industrial purposes (such as areas of state significant or hazardous industries), all developable land in a city can be considered a candidate for the full spectrum of land uses if a sufficiently long term perspective – as is warranted here – is taken. Land subdivided for industrial or commercial uses may well transition to other uses in the future, as we have seen with former industrial areas in the inner suburbs of Melbourne and other regional cities in Victoria, for example. The process of subdivision may provide a one-off opportunity to secure a reasonable open space contribution to cater for the full spectrum of urban uses of the land in question.

Collection and distribution of funds

Council will have opportunities over the next 20-30 years to obtain sites for new open space as well as funds to improve the quality and accessibility of existing open space. Council should develop an open space acquisition plan to support this. Where land cannot be acquired, or is not required, existing open space should be reviewed to identify opportunities to improve its quality, carrying capacity, and utilisation. This could include elements such as lighting, surface improvements, and additional infrastructure beyond the set park service hierarchy.

Funds collected through the open space contribution should be accounted for separately. Funds should be spent in alignment with the strategic directions outlined in the new Open Space Strategy, Open Space Acquisition Program, Asset Management Plans, and Capital Works Programs. The open space projects will vary over time, responding to changing community demands and strategic opportunities. Given this, the program of works should be regularly reviewed and evaluated.

Value of updating the Planning Scheme

As noted earlier, Council can now receive up to 5% open space contribution rate from 'other' residential, commercial and industrial land. It is recommended that Council undertake a Planning Scheme Amendment to apply the rate for standard and low-density areas. This would result in the Council receiving a 3.4% (0.17/5.0) increase in contributions for subdivisions made in standard density areas. For example, if $1 million was received through the 5% contribution rate, this would increase to $1,034,000 under a 5.17% contribution rate. Meanwhile, contributions from low density development would decrease by 7% (0.35/5.0). For example, if $500,000 was received through the 5% contribution rate, this would decrease to $465,000 under a 4.65% contribution rate. However, based on conversations with Council, on average a 5% contribution rate is not being applied through the subdivision act due to the challenges that it poses.



Appendix A: Broad Industry Category

Table 21. Broad Industry Category Breakdown

Broad Industry Category	ANZSIC 1 Digit	Industry Name
Health and education	Education and Training	Other Education
		School Education
		Tertiary Education
	Health Care and Social Assistance	Hospitals
		Medical and Other Health Care Services
		Residential Care and Social Assistance Activities
Knowledge services	Administrative and Support Services	Administrative and Support Services
	Financial and Insurance Services	Financial and Insurance Services
	Information Media and Telecommunications	Information Media and Telecommunications
	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
	Public Administration and Safety	Defence
		Public Administration
		Public Order, Safety and Regulatory Services
	Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	Property Operators and Real Estate Services
		Rental and Hiring Services (except Real Estate)
Population services	Accommodation and Food Services	Accommodation
		Food and Beverage Services
	Arts and Recreation Services	Arts and Recreation Services
	Construction	Construction
	Other Services	Personal and Other Services
		Repair and Maintenance
	Retail Trade	Retail Trade
Traditional Industrial	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
	Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services
	Manufacturing	Chemicals manufacturing
		Food product manufacturing
		Heavy product and equipment manufacturing
		Light product and equipment manufacturing
		Materials manufacturing
		Other product manufacturing
		Wood products manufacturing
	Mining	Mining
	Transport, Postal and Warehousing	Air and Space Transport
		Other Transport
		Road, Rail and Water Transport
		Warehousing and Storage Services
	Wholesale Trade	Wholesale Trade

7.2. Fees And Charges Reduction Policy

DIRECTORATE : Corporate Strategies

Purpose:

This report provides information on the draft Fees and Charges Reduction Policy.

Executive Summary

This report presents the proposed Fees and Charges Reduction Policy.

The proposed policy establishes a governance framework for approval, administration, monitoring and reporting of fee reductions, discounts, concessions and waivers applied to Council's adopted Fees and Charges Schedule.

The policy introduces clear eligibility criteria, approval, segregation of duties, documentation standards and quarterly reporting obligations. It also establishes approval limits on the cumulative value of discounts and waivers to support the integrity of Council's adopted Budget and promote sound financial management practices.

The proposed policy aims to ensure that decisions to reduce, discount or waive fees and charges are made consistently, are aligned with Council's strategic objectives and community outcomes, and comply with Council's obligations under the *Local Government Act 2020* and Council's financial management framework.

MOVED: CR BILLY EDIS
SECONDED: CR VICKI JELLIE

That Council:

1. Adopt the Fees and Charges Reduction Policy 2026.
2. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to make minor administrative and editorial amendments to the Policy that do not materially alter its intent or operation.

CARRIED - 6:0

Background

Council adopts Fees and Charges as part of the annual Budget to support the delivery of services programs, facilities and infrastructure to the community. The adopted Fees and Charges Schedule reflects Council's strategic objectives, service delivery costs, community benefit considerations and long-term financial sustainability.

The policy has been developed to ensure greater transparency, consistency and oversight of discretionary fee decisions and to ensure appropriate management of financial, governance and conflict of interest risks.

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to manage revenue, expenses and financial transactions in accordance with sound financial management principles and adopted financial policies. Uncontrolled discretionary reductions to adopted fees may create financial risks, inconsistent outcomes, perceptions of favouritism, conflicts of interest, and may adversely impact the achievement of Council's adopted Budget and Long-Term Financial Plan.

The policy seeks to ensure that any departure from Council's adopted fees is appropriately authorised, documented, transparent and aligned with Council's strategic objectives, financial management obligations, delegation framework and public accountability responsibilities.

The proposed policy is a Council policy and will be reviewed every four years, or earlier if required due to legislative, regulatory or organisational requirements.

Council's Executive Management Team has considered the draft policy with program consultation on 13 August 2026. Consultation with programs supported the recommended option 2 with clear definitions of the approval thresholds. Training will be required for the procedure application.

Issues

Revenue associated with potential

The proposed policy may impact User Fees and Contributions revenue from Fees and Charges adopted through the annual Budget process. Council's 2027 Budget includes approximately $25 million of revenue from these sources across 74 cost centres, with individual revenue streams ranging from approximately $200 to $3.4 million per annum.

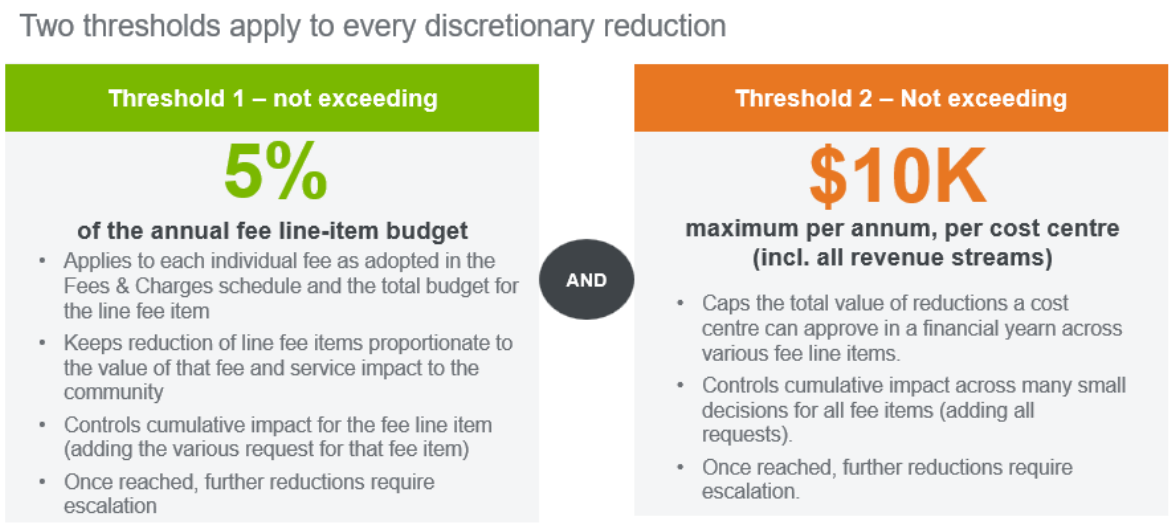
Examples of discretionary discounts:

- Aquazone seasonal discounts include pre-summer 3-month swim membership special.
- Surfside Holiday Park provide Stay 3 pay for 2 or Stay 5 pay for 3 nights deals (Available 01/05 to 01/09).

Challenge in setting approval thresholds

The key challenge in establishing approval limits is balancing appropriate discretion at the program level with protection of Council's overall budget position. Program revenue and fee item bases vary significantly, ranging from approximately $200 to $3 million in annual revenue, meaning a single percentage or fixed-dollar threshold may be either too restrictive for smaller programs or provide excessive discretion for larger programs.

The proposed risk mitigation is therefore a two-fold approval approach, considering both the relative impact at program level (Line fee level) and the cumulative financial impact on Council's overall budget (Full program level), with escalation to higher approval where either threshold is exceeded.



Delegated Approval Framework

The proposed delegation framework requires Council consideration and decision making:

Option 1

Position	Maximum Individual Approval
Service Manager	Up to $500 of the annual budgeted revenue for the fee charge
Manager	Up to $2,500 of the annual budgeted revenue for the fee charge
Director	Up to $5,000 of the annual budgeted revenue for the fee charge
Chief Executive Officer	Over $10,000 of the annual budgeted revenue for the fee charge

This option presents challenges due to the large range of revenue from $200 to $3.4m.

Option 2 (Recommended)

Alternatively, consideration could be given to a management approval model whereby requests are approved by the relevant upline manager, director or executive, rather than being governed by specific financial delegations. Under this approach, fee reductions, discounts and waivers would be managed within the policy criteria. This approval option applies a risk-based approach to determine the appropriate level of approval. Any request outside the criteria will escalate to a Director or Chief Executive Officer for approval.

Eligibility Check (Should return a YES)
The fee item is not a statutory fee
Promotional Campaign (Yes/No)
Budget neutral/betterposition (Yes/No)
Temporary reduction (Yes/No)
This request will not breach the 5% annual threshold for the fee item (Yes/No) Accumulative impact/annum of line fee item
This request will not breach the annual $10k program level (Yes/No) - Total accumlative request impact/annum
No conflict of interest exist with request of approval

Formal approval workflow and procedures

A formal approval workflow and supporting administrative procedures will be developed for implementation post the adoption of this policy. The workflow will ensure all requests are supported by documented business justification, assessed against policy eligibility criteria, approved by the appropriate delegated authority and appropriately recorded within Council's record management systems. Segregation of duties will apply, ensuring that an officer cannot both initiate and approve the same request.

Scope and Exclusions

The Policy applies to discretionary reductions, discounts, concessions and waivers of fees and charges adopted by Council through the Annual Budget process, including any approved fees introduced following budget adoption.

Monitoring and Reporting

To strengthen transparency and oversight, management will provide quarterly reporting to Council on the extent and value of approved fee reductions, discounts and waivers. This will be part of the quarterly financial report.

Actual Outcomes

While it is anticipated that many fee reduction decisions will be budget neutral through increased participation, utilisation or other operational benefits, there is a risk that actual outcomes may differ from those initially forecast. For example, anticipated increases in demand, participation levels or associated revenue may not eventuate, resulting in a reduction in net revenue and an adverse impact on the approved budget position or services provided. The overall financial risk is considered low given the generally small value and infrequent nature of fee discounts and waivers.

Financial Impact

The adoption of this policy is not expected to have a direct financial impact on Council's approved Budget. The policy is intended to strengthen oversight of revenue foregone through discretionary fee reductions and support the effective management of financial risks associated with discounts and waivers. Any financial impact arising from approved fee reductions will continue to be managed within existing budget allocations and monitored through the reporting requirements established under the policy.

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

5 City Leadership

5.4 Our City manages financial resources sustainably.
5.5 Our City promotes organisational culture and performance.
5.7 Our City is committed to sound governance, transparent decision-making and operating with integrity.
5.8 Our City will foster an informed community, enhance the customer experience and engage with the community to help inform key decisions, plans and policies.
5.9 Our City considers strategic risk in its decision making and is committed to providing safe environments where people can thrive.

Timing

The policy will be considered and approved by Council at a scheduled meeting with a proposed two-year review period.

Internal / External Consultation

The development of the proposed Fees and Charges Reduction Policy has been undertaken in response to a request from Council to establish a formal governance framework for the approval and oversight of fee reductions, discounts and waivers.

Consultation has been undertaken with the Executive Management Team on the proposed policy framework, including the eligibility criteria, delegated approval requirements, reporting obligations and associated governance controls.

Consultation with programs supported the recommended option 2 with clear definitions of the approval thresholds. Training will be required for the procedure application.

Legal Risk / Impact

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires councils to manage revenue, expenses and financial transactions in accordance with sound financial management principles and adopted financial policies.

Section 101 of the Act requires that revenue and financial transactions be managed in accordance with Council's financial policies and strategic plans, financial risks be monitored and managed prudently, and financial policies provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community.

Sections 101 and 102 further require Council to adopt financial policies that give effect to these financial management principles.

Officers' Declaration of Interest

No conflict of interest has been declared.

Conclusion

Council is requested to consider the proposed governance framework, including the delegated approval limits, quarterly reporting requirements and implementation of supporting procedures from adoption date, prior to the policy being presented for adoption.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Fees and Charges Reduction Policy 2026 DRAFT [**7.2.1** - 7 pages]

WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Fees and Charges Reduction Policy

POLICY TYPE: COUNCIL (DRAFT)
APPROVAL DATE: September 2026
REVIEW DATE: September 2030

FEES AND CHARGES REDUCTION POLICY

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Title:	*Fees and Charges Reduction Policy*
Policy Type:	*Council*
Responsible Branch:	*Financial Services*
Responsible Officer:	*Manager Financial Services*
Document Status:	*DRAFT*
Approved By:	*Council*
Adopted Date:	*September 2026*
Review Date:	*September 2030*

FEES AND CHARGES REDUCTION POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Council adopts Fees and Charges as part of the annual Budget to support the delivery of services, programs and providing facilities and infrastructure to the community. The adopted Fees and Charges Schedule reflects Council's strategic objectives, service delivery costs, community benefit considerations and long-term financial sustainability.

The *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to manage revenue, expenses and financial transactions in accordance with sound financial management principles and adopted financial policies. The Act requires that revenue and financial transactions be managed in accordance with Council's financial policies and strategic plans, financial risks be monitored and managed prudently, and financial policies provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community. Council must adopt financial policies that give effect to these financial management principles.

While Council recognises that there may be circumstances where a discount, concession or waiver of an adopted fee is appropriate, such decisions must be made in a transparent, equitable and accountable manner. Uncontrolled discretionary reductions may create financial risks, inconsistent outcomes, perceptions of favouritism, or conflicts of interest, and may adversely impact the achievement of Council's adopted Budget and Financial Plan.

This Policy establishes the governance framework for the approval, administration, monitoring and reporting of discounts, concessions and waivers to Council's adopted Fees and Charges. The Policy seeks to ensure that any departure from adopted fees is appropriately authorised, documented, transparent and aligned with Council's financial management obligations, delegation framework and public accountability responsibilities under the *Local Government Act 2020*.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Council's Fees and Charges Schedule.

1.1. Scope

This Policy applies to all discretionary Council fees and charges adopted through the annual Budget process, as well as any additional fees and charges approved by Council following Budget adoption, where a reduction, discount, concession or waiver is proposed.

1.2. Exclusions

Exclusions to the scope of this Policy include:

- Statutory fees, which should only be waived, fully or partially, pursuant to relevant legislation.
- Permit or application fees refundable under legislation.
- Circumstances in which another Council policy that includes a fee waiver component is more applicable.
- Fines and penalties (Local Laws), which should be referred to existing appeal mechanisms.
- Bonds.
- Bad debts write off.
- Fees waived as result of any hardship applications, payment plan arrangements in accordance with the Debt Management Policy and procedures.
- Refunds resulting from overpayments, duplicate payments, administrative errors or system processing errors.
- Reduced fees, refunds or discounts associated with cancelled bookings, reservations or services, where the refund is processed in accordance with Council's approved terms and

conditions or operational procedures. This includes circumstances where Council is unable to provide a service, program, facility or activity due to maintenance works, emergency events, public safety concerns, equipment failures, facility closures, or other unforeseen events outside the customer's control.

- Council rates and property charges. Please refer to Council's relevant Debt Management Policies for guidelines concerning rates and relief for ratepayers.
- Commercial agreements or contractual arrangements approved separately by Council or under delegated authority.
- Internal fees charged between program activities.

1.3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Council	Warrnambool City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 2020
Fee Waiver or discount	A reduction, concession, discount or full waiver of a fee or charge that has been adopted by Council through the Annual Budget and Fees and Charges Schedule, resulting in Council receiving less than the approved fee amount.
Statutory fees and charges	Statutory fees and charges are those that are set and regulated by legislation. These fees are nondiscretionary and must align with the relevant statute or current Ministerial advice. This fee type cannot be waived or reduced, pursuant to relevant legislation.
Discretionary fees and charges	Discretionary fees and charges are not regulated by legislation and are set by Council through the adoption of the Schedule annually.
Bad Debts write off	An amount owing to Council that has been determined to be unrecoverable after reasonable and appropriate debt recovery actions have been undertaken, and which has been approved for write-off in accordance with Council's Debt Management Policy, Financial Delegations, and applicable accounting standards.
Fee Charge	The individual fee or charge per adopted Fees and Charges in the annual adopted budget.
Annual budgeted revenue for the fee charge	Means the total revenue expected to be generated from a specific fee or charge item during a financial year, as adopted by Council through the Annual Budget.
Cumulative Annual Discount	Total value of all approved fee reductions, discounts, concessions and waivers applied to a fee category, service, program or fee type during a financial year, expressed as the aggregate amount of revenue foregone by Council compared to the adopted fee or charge.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this Policy is to establish a transparent and accountable framework for the reduction, discounting or waiver of Council adopted fees and charges. The Policy seeks to:

- Ensure Council and the community understand the basis upon which fees and charges may be reduced, discounted or waived.
- Promote consistency, transparency and accountability in decision-making relating to Council fees and charges.
- Ensure decisions are aligned with Council's strategic objectives, Council Plan, Annual Budget and other adopted Council strategies and policies.
- Support responsible financial management and appropriate stewardship of public resources.
- Establish clear approval, delegation, monitoring and reporting requirements for fee reductions, discounts and waivers.
- Ensure Council complies with all relevant legislative, regulatory and statutory obligations relating to the setting, administration and management of fees and charges.
- Provide assurance that any reduction, discount or waiver of fees and charges is undertaken in a manner that is equitable, appropriately documented and in the best interests of the municipal community.

3. ELIGIBILITY FRAMEWORK

The overarching principles for setting fees and charges are that the waiver or discounting of fees and charges should only be required infrequently short-term and provided only in response to specific circumstances or identified community benefit outcomes.

- Fees can be waived, reduced or otherwise altered in accordance with operational policies as adopted from time-to-time including incentives for internal and external promotional campaigns where there is an identified community benefit or better budgeted outcome.
- Any reduction, discount, concession or waiver of a fee or charge must be managed within the approved operating budget of the relevant service or program.
- Discounts and waivers are not intended to establish an ongoing or permanent alternative fee structure. Where a recurring or ongoing reduction is considered necessary, the matter should be assessed through Council's annual budget and fees and charges review process to ensure transparency, equity and consideration of the broader financial impacts.
- The cumulative value of discounts, concessions and waiver requests within a fee category of a program must not exceed 5% of the annual budgeted revenue for that fee line item without approval from the Director or Chief Executive Officer.
- The cumulative value of all discounts, concessions and waivers requests within a program across all fee line items must not exceed a maximum of $10,000 per annum of the annual budgeted revenue, without approval from the Director or Chief Executive Officer.

4. APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS

All proposed fee reductions, discounts and waivers must be subject to a documented approval process and approved in accordance with Council's Delegations Framework prior to being offered, communicated, committed to, or processed within Council systems.

Council officers must not provide, imply or commit to a discount, concession or waiver before the required approval has been obtained from the appropriate delegated authority.

The approval process must clearly document the rationale for the request, the financial impact, alignment with the objectives of this Policy, and confirmation that any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest have been appropriately managed.

All fee reductions, discounts, concessions and waivers must be approved in accordance with the following delegated authority limits:

Position	Maximum Individual Approval
Service Manager or Manager	Within the eligibility criteria as outlined in the procedure
Director or Chief Executive Officer	Outside the eligibility criteria as outlined in the procedure

No officer may approve a request that they have initiated, assessed or recommended.

5. RECORD KEEPING

Ensuring all requests for fee reductions, discounts, concessions or waivers, together with the assessment, approval rationale and final decision, are appropriately documented and retained in accordance with Council's records management, governance and audit requirements.

6. REPORTING

The quarterly finance reporting will provide council with visibility over the extent, value, rationale and budget impact of discounts and waivers, without becoming overly operational.

Management must provide a quarterly report to council detailing all approved fee reductions, discounts, concessions and waivers granted under delegated authority during the reporting period.

The report must include, at a minimum:

- The total number of approved fee reductions, discounts, concessions and waivers.
- The cumulative value of revenue foregone during the reporting period and financial year to date.
- A summary by service area or fee charge category.

7. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If a staff member involved in the process has a conflict of interest, whether it be actual, potential, or perceived, they are required to declare the conflict and remove themselves from the process. Another staff member at a similar or higher delegation level will be required to assess and approve the request in the absence of the conflicted staff member.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Warrnambool City Council Plan.
- Warrnambool City Council Annual Budget.

- Warrnambool City Council Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035.
- Debt Management Policy.
- Leases And Licensing Policy 2025.
- Revenue and Rating Plan 2025-2029 (Revised June 2026).
- Warrnambool City Council Local Law Number 2 – Community Amenity Local Law.
- Delegations and Authorisations Policies.

9. RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 2020.*
- Ministerial Guidelines Relating To Payment Of Rates And Charges – December 2025.
- Local Government Service Rates And Charges – Minister's Good Practice Guidelines – January 2026.
- Planning and Environment (Fees) Regulations 2016 (Vic).

10. GOVERNANCE

10.1. Owner

The Manager Financial Services will be responsible for this policy and for ensuring the policy is implemented, progress is monitored and the policy is regularly reviewed.

10.2. Review

This policy should be reviewed every four years or where there is a change to legislation or a significant change to investment market conditions.

10.3. Compliance Responsibility

10.3.1. Executive Management Team (Chief Executive and Directors)
10.3.2. Managers and Supervisors
10.3.3. All Employees

10.4. Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).

Warrnambool City Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. The Council will formally involve elected employee health and safety representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

7.3. Draft Operations Report, Financial Statements And Annual Performance 2025-2026

DIRECTORATE : Corporate Strategies

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to present the draft 2025-2026 Performance Statement and Financial Statements to Council for in-principle approval as recommended by Council's Audit and Risk Committee and in accordance with Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2020.

It further seeks to nominate two Councillors to have delegated authority to sign the annual accounts and performance statement on behalf of Council, once final sign off has been received from the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO).

This authorisation will enable Council to meet its statutory obligations for the presentation of its Annual Statements (as part of the Annual Report) to an open Council meeting by 31 October 2026. The Annual Report, which includes the Financial and Performance Statements, will return to Council for consideration at a future Council Meeting.

Also provided with this report for Council's information is the draft Report of Operations, including governance information, which accompanies the Financial Statements and the Annual Performance Statement.

This report also seeks in-principle approval for the certifying of the Governance information by the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer.

Executive Summary

Council's Annual Report comprises three sections: an operations report, financial statements and a performance statement.

The Annual Report informs the community about the progress made to implement the Council Plan and about Council's financial performance in relation to the annual approved budget. The report also covers Council's progress across several key industry indicators.

Council continues to make good progress in delivering a wide range of important services to the community. Council's financial sustainability remains sound, however, it continues to operate in an increasingly complex and uncertain environment.

Cost-shifting, rate-capping constraints, ongoing external volatility in international markets, global supply chain disruptions and persistent inflationary pressures (particularly in relation to construction and asset renewal costs) are some of the head winds Council has had to manage in the last twelve months. In addition, the $65 million periodic revaluation of key assets undertaken in this financial year is highlighting further pressure on Council's asset renewal gap and ongoing escalation of maintenance costs. In this context, Council must continue to carefully balance service delivery expectations with the need to maintain and renew an asset base now valued at more than $863 million.

During the 2025–2026 financial year, Council delivered $13.9 million in capital works, including the CBD Bus Interchange, Wollaston Road power relocation, and two major roundabout projects.

Other capital works projects included the construction of the city's first pump track, repairs to Wollaston Road bridge, a new fish weighing gantry at the Port of Warrnambool and a new beach access point off McGennan Car Park that features an accessible ramp. These projects were coupled with the further stage of development and delivery of many key multiyear projects.

Some of these include the Key Worker housing project at Shipwreck Caravan Park, Aquazone roof repairs and pool repaint, outdoor netball court refurbishment at ARC stadium, and the further design stages of Wollaston Road development.

Along with a range of capital works projects there were numerous highlights including: Warrnambool being awarded Top Tourism Town by the Victorian Tourism Industry Council; the hosting of a Red Hot Summer concert (which will return to Warrnambool for another three years); adoption of Council's inaugural Creative Strategy – which gave rise to the Live Music Action Plan and subsequent Warrnambool Live Program of music events staged across the CBD in October and November 2025.

In August 2025 we delivered what was the largest round of community grants to date, providing $311,991 to 47 local groups and events.

Twenty-five local clubs, organisations and groups shared in $121,147 through the Community Development Fund, while 22 events received a combined $190,844 from the Festivals and Events Fund.

Our Financial and Performance Statements are audited by the Victorian Auditor-General under part 3 of the *Audit Act 1994*. These audits are conducted by contractors as agents of the Auditor-General. RSD Audit has been appointed Auditor-General's agent for Warrnambool City Council and conducted the 2025-26 audit.

The Audit and Risk Committee considered the draft statements at its meeting held on Tuesday 1 September 2026. The recommendations in this report were considered and endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee at that meeting.

Sections 98-100 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA) and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* deal with statutory procedures that govern the preparation of an Annual Report inclusive of Financial Statements, Performance Statement, Report of Operations, auditor's reports, and adoption by Council.

Section 98 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that Council must prepare an Annual Report as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year.

The Annual Report must contain:

a) a report of operations of the Council;
b) an audited Performance Statement;
c) audited Financial Statements;
d) a copy of the auditor's report on the Performance Statement;
e) a copy of the auditor's report on the Financial Statements under Part 3 of the Audit Act 1994;
f) any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

Council must first pass a resolution to give in-principle approval to the Performance Statement and Financial Statements before providing the statements to the auditor.

After the Financial and Performance Statements have achieved final sign-off from the Victorian Auditor General, the Mayor must report on the implementation of the Council Plan by presenting the Annual Report at an open Council meeting within four months of the end of the financial year (October 31).

The final version of the Annual Report to be considered by Council will be aesthetically improved and include a pictorial record of operations.

Once considered the Annual Report remains available on Council's website for the community to access. Hard copies of the report are made available at Councils service center and Library.

The Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with the objectives contained in Council's Election Period Policy, with specific reference to item 2.8.2 of the policy which states that the Annual Report must not include matter that may be considered electioneering or publicising attributes or achievements of individual Councillors.

The attached financial statements and performance statement are subject to audit completion.

MOVED: CR WILLY BENTER
SECONDED: CR BILLY EDIS

1. That Council approve in principle the 2025-2026 Financial Statements which have been subject to external audit by the Auditor-General's agent, with the outcomes also having been reviewed by Warrnambool City Council's Audit & Risk Committee.
2. That Council approve in principle the 2025-2026 Performance Statement which has been subject to external audit by the Auditor-General's agent, with the outcomes also having been reviewed by Warrnambool City Council's Audit & Risk Committee.
3. That Councillor Ben Blain and Councillor Matthew Walsh be delegated authority to certify the 2025-2026 Financial Statements, after any changes recommended by the review of audit from the Victorian Auditor General have been made.
4. That Councillor Ben Blain and Councillor Matthew Walsh be delegated authority to certify the 2025-2026 Performance Statement, after any changes by the review of audit from the Victorian Auditor General have been made.
5. That the Mayor Councillor Ben Blain and Chief Executive Officer Andrew Mason be authorised to certify the governance and management arrangements as contained in the final Operations Report.

CARRIED - 6:0

Summary Financial Result

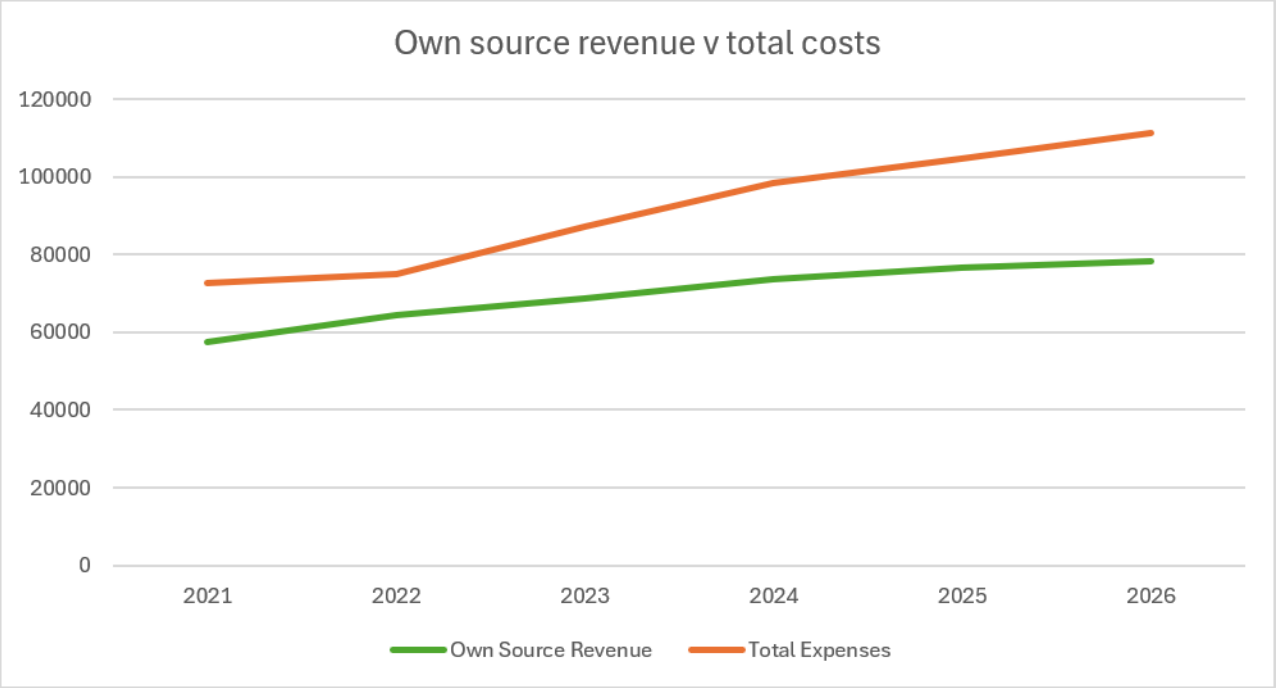
Operating Result

Council achieved a surplus of $3.3million in 2025-2026. This surplus is lower than the previous year's surplus of $11.9 million and the budgeted surplus of $7.5 million. The operating surplus includes several non-cash and one-off items and does not reflect the amount of cash available.

Council reported an operating surplus that was $4.1 million below the adopted budget. This variance was influenced by:

- Additional operating grants of $5.1 million which included the prepaid portion of the 2026-27 payment from Victorian Grants Commission $4.8 million;
- Lower capital grants revenue due to not receiving budgeted grant of $4.9 million for the Shipwreck Key Worker Housing project;
- Additional non-monetary contributions received from Developers $4.5 million;
- Increased employee costs of $864k due to funded retention payments for the Childcare sector and additional employee on costs identified through the forecast process;
- Increased depreciation of $2.8 million due to revaluation of Buildings in the prior year and indexation of Parks and Open space and Streetscapes in 2025-26 which includes $500k for the $14 million found assets;
- Increased materials and services costs, primarily due to $4.5 million in project expenditure being expensed in accordance with accounting standards, rather than capitalised as originally budgeted which include $2.8 million for the Coastal Connect shared service project. Budget rollovers from 2024–25 into 2025-26 (incorporated through the revised budget) contributed to a further $1.5m to the variance;
- Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure includes the unbudgeted net loss of Koroit Street properties of $1 million and the impact of infrastructure demolitions of $1.1 million.

For 2025–2026, Council has a negative underlying result of $7.7 million compared to $4.1 million the previous year.



Revenue adjusted to exclude – Grants (operating & capital), Contributions (monetary & non-monetary)

The graph demonstrates that total costs are increasing at a faster rate than Council's own-source revenue, resulting in a narrowing capacity to fund ongoing service delivery from recurring own source revenue. This increases Council's reliance on government grants and other external funding to support its overall financial position. As more own-source revenue is required to meet operating costs, there is less capacity to fund capital investment, particularly discretionary new capital and asset renewal, from Council's own resources.

The widening gap between the rate cap and underlying cost escalation presents an ongoing financial sustainability risk for Council. While the rate cap limits growth in Council's primary source of recurring revenue, operating costs continue to be subject to inflationary and market pressures. Council continues to face volatility in international markets, disrupted global supply chains and elevated cost pressures, which can increase the cost of delivering services and capital works.

Financial Position

Cash and Cash equivalents increased by $2.5 million compared to the previous year due to receiving $4.8 million from VLGGC in advance for 2026-27 offset by increased investments of $6 million and net cash inflow from other activities of $3.7 million, primarily due to lower capital works expenditure, with several projects delayed or carried forward to future years.

The working capital ratio, which measures the ability to meet current commitments by comparing current assets to current liabilities, is 302%, exceeding the target of 176% and indicating a strong position. Of the cash and investment funds, $17.5 million is committed to projects scheduled for delivery in 2026–2027 and reserves, $19.6 million and remainder to fund current liabilities. The rollover projects include $10 million of key projects to be delivered over multiple years.

Outstanding debtor balances show an increasing trend across most debtor classes, reflecting continued cost-of-living pressures and the impact of hardship arrangements on customers' ability to meet payment obligations. Rates and infringement receivables have been particularly impacted, with overdue balances increasing from prior year by approximately 20% and 16%, respectively.

The increase in overdue balances has also resulted in a 20% increase in the provision for doubtful debts totaling $1.7 million, reflecting the higher level of credit risk and the assessment of amounts that may not ultimately be recoverable. The trend highlights the ongoing financial pressure on the community and the importance of effective debt management, collection processes, and appropriate hardship support.

Borrowings totalled $5.3 million at 30 June 2026, with $1.5 million repaid during this year. With Council maintaining a conservative loan position to ensure appropriate borrowing capacity for important generational infrastructure projects if required in the future.

Unrestricted cash is above the $5 million threshold and subject to finalisation of rollovers and any associated transfers to Reserves, estimated at $6.8 million.

Other Committed Reserves decreased by $4.8 million, mainly due to a net reduction of $8.9 million in general committed reserves. This reflects the use of reserves for their intended purposes. The reduction was partly offset by $4.8 million in Victorian Local Government Grants Commission funding received in advance for 2026–27 service delivery and $1.2 million in proceeds from the sale of the Koroit Street properties, which are being held for future purposes. Developer Contributions also decreased by a net $604,000.

Capital Works Delivery

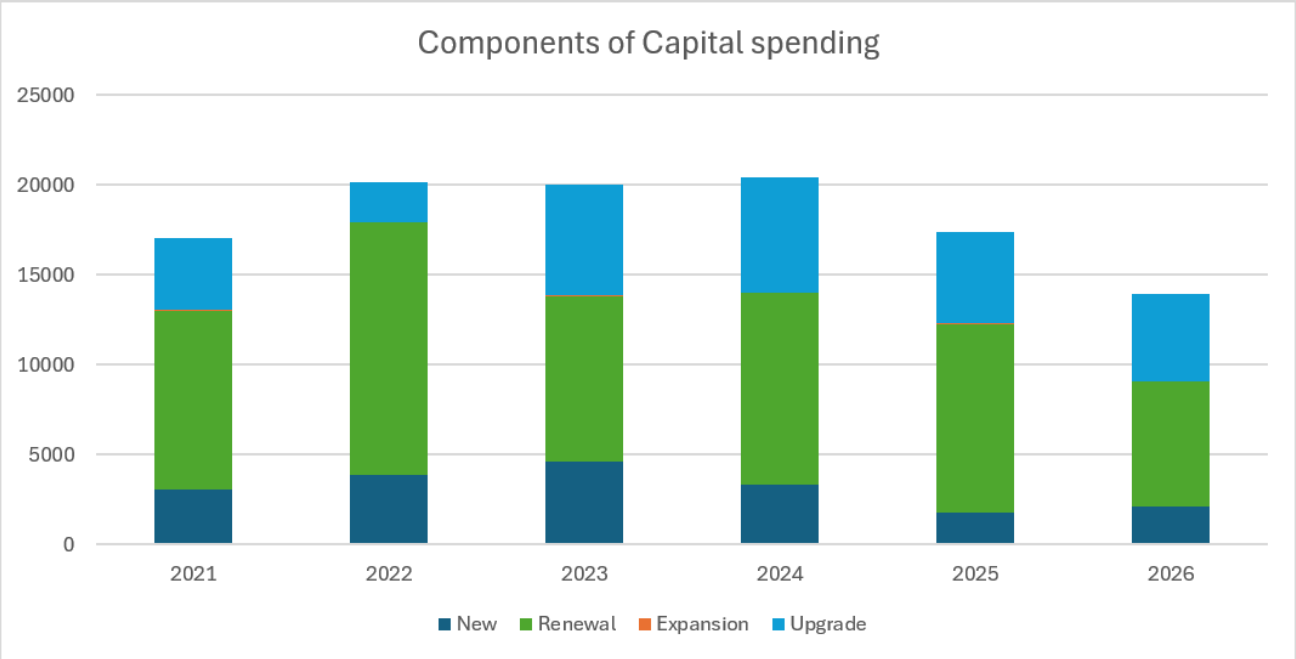
The financial statements outline one of the most significant issues this financial year with a 38% delivery of capital works against budget. The continuing pressure to conclude projects in the nominated year of delivery is exacerbated by an increasingly complex compliance environment at both a state and federal legislative level. This year's result should also be tempered with the near-term delivery of a substantial suite of projects being delivered shortly post end of the financial reporting period and the staged delivery of multi-year projects.

The lower delivery rate reflects the timing of seasonal works, including approximately $1 million of Aquazone projects, together with delays to several significant projects pending strategic decisions, funding confirmation and consideration of the most appropriate delivery approach.

The $2.1 million Matron Swinton project did not commence during the year, with Council continuing advocacy for the project and receipt of any government funding. The $5.2 million Shipwreck Bay Key Worker Accommodation project was also delayed pending a Council decision and confirmation of funding, with delivery expected over a two-year delivery. Year 1 focused on the design and incurred initial costs of $174k with delivery expected in 2026-27 upon receipt of funding. The Civic Centre Accommodation project of $953k was delayed while strategic scoping was undertaken to determine the appropriate scope and delivery approach. The $5.4 million Wollaston Road project was delayed while Council considered the most appropriate funding strategy and delivery model.

The Coastal Connect project further contributed to the variance, with $2.8 million incurred during the year being expensed in accordance with applicable accounting standards rather than recognised as capital expenditure. The budget had anticipated this expenditure would be treated as a capital project, resulting in a material variance between actual capital works delivery and the budget.

The budgeted $2.2m project to relocate high-voltage powerlines at Wollaston Road is nearing completion, with $1.2 million savings against the approved budget.



The chart shows a reduction in renewal expenditure in 2025–26 to approximately $7 million, compared with around $10–11 million in each of the previous two years and a peak of approximately $14 million in 2021–22. Council has carried forward the budgeted contributions to renewal from this year to undertake further gap reduction efforts in the 2026 2027 with some significant projects being completed adjacent to year end including scheduled Aquazone renewal works of $1.1 million, Netball ARC Stadium outdoor netball court refurbishment of $200k and City Centre Lighting renewal 200k as part of the ongoing works.

Council completed upgrade works at Timor/Gilles Street roundabout for $908k and Botanic Road $1.3m, with both projects including a large component of asset renewal as part of the overall upgrades.

The Performance Statement identifies a reduction in Council's asset renewal ratio to 50.51%, below the target of 52.33%. This reflects the lower level of renewal expenditure delivered during 2025–26 compared to the increased depreciation costs. This highlights the continued need to prioritise renewal investment within the forward capital program. Maintaining a strong focus on asset renewal will be important to address the renewal gap and support the long-term sustainability of Council's asset base.

Asset Revaluations

A major contributor to the improvement in Council's balance sheet was the revaluation of major infrastructure asset classes. During the year, Council recognised $65.9 million in revaluation gains, reflecting increases in the assessed value of its infrastructure assets. The revaluation gains included:

- Roads: $19.7 million.
- Parks/Open Space/Streetscapes: $26.8 million.
- Recreational facilities: $7.7 million.
- Drainage: $3.9 million.
- Aerodromes: $3.5 million.

The increase in asset values results in a higher depreciation expenses needed in future years and the increased level of asset renewal investment required to maintain Council's asset base. This information places additional pressure on future operating results and capital funding requirements.

Prior Year Adjustments

The financial statements include a number of prior-period adjustments arising from the review of Council's asset register and historical capital work in progress balances. These adjustments have been made to ensure assets and work in progress are correctly recognised and valued in accordance with applicable accounting standards, with comparative balances restated from 1 July 2024. Overall, the adjustments resulted in an improvement to Council's net equity position of approximately $7 million.

The key adjustments include:

- Previously unrecorded assets: Open space assets identified during the year that existed at the reporting date but had not previously been recognised many having previously fallen below the asset recognition threshold have now been brought to account, resulting in a net increase in asset values of $10.6 million at 1 July 2024.

- Building revaluation: A $1.2 million reduction in work in progress was recognised where costs incurred prior to 1 July 2024 had already been incorporated into the carrying values of buildings through the 30 June 2025 revaluation process, avoiding duplication of asset values.
- Capital work in progress review: A detailed review of historical work in progress identified $2.3 million incurred prior to 1 July 2024 that should have been written down in earlier reporting periods. The comparative balances have been restated accordingly.

The adjustments improve the accuracy of Council's reported asset values and provide a more appropriate basis for future depreciation and asset management planning.

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

5 City Leadership
5.4 Our City manages financial resources sustainably
5.7 Our City is committed to sound governance, transparent decision-making and operating with integrity.

Timing

Council will approve in principle the 2025-26 Financial and Performance Statements at a scheduled meeting. After the Financial and Performance Statements have received final sign-off from the Victorian Auditor General, the Mayor must report on the implementation of the Council Plan by presenting the Annual Report at an open Council meeting within four months of the end of the financial year (31 October).

Internal / External Consultation

The Annual Report remains available on Council's website for the community to access when adopted. Hard copies of the report are made available at Councils service centre and Library.

Legal Risk / Impact

Sections 98-100 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (LGA) and the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020 deal with statutory procedures that govern the preparation of an Annual Report inclusive of Financial Statements, Performance Statement, Report of Operations, auditor's reports, and adoption by Council.

Section 98 of the *Local Government Act 2020* states that Council must prepare an Annual Report as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year.

Officers' Declaration of Interest

Nil.

Conclusion

Council is provided with the draft financial statements and performance statement for the year ending 30 June 2026 for in-principle approval as recommended by Council's Audit and Risk Committee and in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Annual Financial Statements 2026 [**7.3.1** - 62 pages]
2. Draft Performance Statement 2026 [**7.3.2** - 21 pages]

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Warrnambool City Council

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Warrnambool City Council

Annual Financial Report

for the year ended 30 June 2026

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Warrnambool City Council

Annual Financial Report

for the year ended 30 June 2026

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Warrnambool City Council

Annual Financial Report
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Certification of the Financial Statements

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*, the Australian Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements.

Ann Van Zyl

Principal Accounting Officer

dd MMMM yyyy

Warrnambool

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly the financial transactions of Warrnambool City Council for the year ended 30 June 2026 and the financial position of the Council as at that date.

At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances which would render any particulars in the financial statements to be misleading or inaccurate.

We have been authorised by the Council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* to certify the financial statements in their final form.

DRAFT

Cr Ben Blain
Mayor
dd MMMM yyyy
Warrnambool

Cr Matt Walsh
Councillor
dd MMMM yyyy
Warrnambool

Andrew Mason
Chief Executive Officer
dd MMMM yyyy
Warrnambool

Warrnambool City Council

Annual Financial Report
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Victorian Auditor-General's Office Report

Insert VAGO Report here

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Warrnambool City Council

Annual Financial Report
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Victorian Auditor-General's Office Report (continued)

Insert VAGO Report here

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Warrnambool City Council

Annual Financial Report
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Understanding Council's Financial Statements

Introduction

Each year, individual Local Governments across Victoria are required to present a set of audited financial statements to their Council and community.

What you will find in the Report

The financial report set out the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of Council for the financial year ended 30 June 2026.

The format of the financial report is standard across all Victorian Councils and complies with both the accounting and reporting requirements of Australian Accounting Standards and requirements as set down by Local Government Victoria.

About the Certification of the Financial Statements

The financial statements must be certified by senior staff and Councillors as "presenting fairly" the Council's financial results for the year as well as Council's financial position, and are required to be adopted by Council - ensuring both responsibility for and ownership of the financial statements.

About the Primary Financial Statements

The financial statements incorporate 5 "primary" financial statements:

1. Comprehensive Income Statement
Summarises Council's financial performance for the year, listing all income & expenses.

Includes other comprehensive income which primarily records changes in the fair values of Council's property, infrastructure, plant and equipment.

2. Balance Sheet
A 30 June snapshot of Council's financial position indicating its assets, liabilities and "net wealth".

3. Statement of Changes in Equity
The overall change for the year (in dollars) of Council's "net wealth".

4. Statement of Cash Flows
Indicates where Council's cash came from and where it was spent.

5. Statement of Capital Works
This statement details all amounts expended by Council on capital works.

About the Notes to the Financial Report

The Notes to the financial statements provide greater detail and additional information on the 5 primary financial statements.

About the Auditor's Reports

Council's financial statements are required to be audited by the Victorian Auditor Generals Office.

The auditor provides an audit report which gives an opinion on whether the financial statements present fairly the Council's financial performance and position.

Who uses the Financial Report?

The financial report is a publicly available document and is used by (but not limited to) Councillors, residents and ratepayers, employees, suppliers, contractors, customers, Local Government Victoria, state and federal governments, and financiers including banks and other financial institutions.

The financial statements must be presented at a Council meeting (open to the public) by 31 October.

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Warrnambool City Council

Comprehensive Income Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
Income / Revenue			
Rates and charges	3.1	50,953	48,715
Statutory fees and fines		2,745	2,692
User fees	3.2	20,771	19,522
Grants - operating	3.3	21,435	20,409
Grants - capital	3.3	1,827	2,373
Contributions - monetary	3.4	3,264	3,278
Contributions - non monetary	3.4	9,513	13,942
Other income	3.5	3,918	5,724
Total income / revenue		114,426	116,655
Expenses			
Employee costs	4.1	47,707	43,461
Materials and services	4.2	36,214	36,408
Depreciation	4.3	23,298	20,980
Depreciation - Right of use assets		497	486
Allowance for impairment losses		311	302
Borrowing costs		140	183
Finance Costs - Leases		43	45
Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		1,943	1,982
Other expenses	4.4	953	875
Total expenses		111,106	104,722
Surplus for the year		3,320	11,933
Other comprehensive income:			
Items that will not be reclassified to surplus or deficit in future periods			
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	9.1	65,852	590
Total items which will not be reclassified subsequently to the operating result		65,852	590
Total other comprehensive income		65,852	590
Total comprehensive result		69,172	12,523

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The above comprehensive income statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Warrnambool City Council

Balance Sheet

as at 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 $ '000	Restated 2025 $ '000
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	5.1	9,786	7,201
Trade and other receivables	5.1	5,054	4,692
Prepayments		941	1,006
Other financial assets	5.1	54,000	48,000
Inventories		262	178
Other assets		1,438	1,815
Total current assets		71,481	62,892
Non-current assets			
Other financial assets	5.1	2	2
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	863,364	803,198
Right-of-use assets		975	1,472
Total non-current assets		864,341	804,672
Total assets		935,822	867,564
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	5.2	6,209	5,156
Trust funds and deposits		2,453	2,362
Contract and other liabilities	5.2	5,366	5,786
Provisions	5.4	8,061	7,675
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.3	1,125	1,493
Lease liabilities		457	494
Total current liabilities		23,671	22,966
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	5.4	981	1,018
Interest-bearing liabilities	5.3	4,216	5,341
Lease liabilities		600	1,057
Total non-current liabilities		5,797	7,416
Total liabilities		29,468	30,382
Net assets		906,354	837,182
Equity			
Accumulated surplus		311,553	303,449
Reserves	9.1	594,801	533,733
Total Equity		906,354	837,182

The above balance sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

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Warrnambool City Council

Statement of Changes in Equity

for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	Total $ '000	Accumulated Surplus $ '000	Revaluation Reserves $ '000	Other Reserves $ '000
2026					
Balance at beginning of the financial year		837,182	303,449	509,284	24,449
Surplus for the year		3,320	3,320	–	–
Other comprehensive income					
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	6.1	65,852	–	65,852	–
Other comprehensive income		65,852	–	65,852	–
Total comprehensive income		69,172	3,320	65,852	–
Transfers to other reserves	9.1	–	(12,060)	–	12,060
Transfers from other reserves	9.1	–	16,844	–	(16,844)
Balance at end of the financial year		906,354	311,553	575,136	19,665
2025					
Balance at beginning of the financial year		817,644	291,291	508,694	17,659
Correction of prior period errors – retrospective	11.1	7,015	7,015	–	–
Surplus for the year		11,933	11,933	–	–
Other comprehensive income					
Net asset revaluation gain/(loss)	6.1	590	–	590	–
Other comprehensive income		590	–	590	–
Total comprehensive income		12,523	11,933	590	–
Transfers to other reserves	9.1	–	(11,109)	–	11,109
Transfers from other reserves	9.1	–	4,319	–	(4,319)
Balance at end of the financial year		837,182	303,449	509,284	24,449

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The above statement of changes in equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Warrnambool City Council

Statement of Cash Flows

for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 Inflows/ (Outflows) $ '000	2025 Inflows/ (Outflows) $ '000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Rates and charges		50,615	48,284
Statutory fees and fines		2,698	2,648
User fees		21,013	19,522
Grants - operating		21,729	20,809
Grants - capital		810	3,540
Contributions - monetary		3,264	3,278
Interest received		2,400	2,584
Trust funds and deposits taken		4,133	3,025
Other receipts		1,524	3,586
Net GST refund		128	13
Employee costs		(47,284)	(42,897)
Materials and services		(33,719)	(33,462)
Short-term, low value and variable lease payments		(111)	(170)
Trust funds and deposits repaid		(4,042)	(3,066)
Other payments (incl. Interest paid)		(426)	–
Net cash provided by operating activities	9.2	22,732	27,694
Cash flows from investing activities			
Payments for property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	6.1	(13,898)	(17,350)
Proceeds from sale of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment		1,781	526
Payments for investments		(62,000)	(51,000)
Proceeds from sale of investments		56,000	46,000
Net cash used in investing activities		(18,117)	(21,824)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of borrowings		(1,493)	(1,678)
Interest paid - lease liability		(43)	(45)
Repayment of lease liabilities		(494)	(480)
Net cash flow used in financing activities		(2,030)	(2,203)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		2,585	3,667
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the financial year		7,201	3,534
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year		9,786	7,201
Financing arrangements	5.5	6,747	8,825

The above statement of cash flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

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Warrnambool City Council

Statement of Capital Works

for the year ended 30 June 2026

	Note	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
Property			
Buildings specialised		1,449	2,957
Buildings non-specialised		19	38
Building improvements		–	385
Total property		1,468	3,380
Plant and equipment			
Plant, machinery and equipment		1,520	2,319
Fixtures, fittings and furniture		222	–
Computers and telecommunications		121	409
Library books		261	230
Other		15	–
Total plant and equipment		2,139	2,958
Infrastructure			
Roads		5,934	4,048
Bridges		636	89
Footpaths and cycleways		888	2,074
Drainage		610	1,775
Recreational, leisure and community facilities		14	379
Parks, open space and streetscapes		725	780
Aerodromes		–	272
Off street car parks		–	291
Other infrastructure		1,485	1,304
Total infrastructure		10,292	11,012
Total capital works expenditure	6.1	13,899	17,350
Represented by:			
New asset expenditure		2,132	1,758
Asset renewal expenditure		6,934	10,469
Asset expansion expenditure		–	83
Asset upgrade expenditure		4,833	5,040
Total capital works expenditure		13,899	17,350

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The above statement of capital works should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1. Overview

Introduction

Warrnambool City Council was established by an Order of the Governor in Council on 20 September 1994 and is a body corporate.

The Council's main office is located at 25 Liebig Street, Warrnambool.

Statement of compliance

These financial statements are a general purpose financial report that consists of a Comprehensive Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Equity, Statement of Cash Flows, Statement of Capital Works and Notes accompanying these financial statements. The general purpose financial report complies with Australian Accounting Standards (AAS), other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board, the *Local Government Act 2020*, and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.*

The Council is a not-for-profit entity and therefore applies the additional AUS paragraphs applicable to a not-for-profit entity under the Australian Accounting Standards.

Accounting policy information

1.1 Basis of accounting

Accounting policies are selected and applied in a manner which ensures that the resulting financial information satisfies the concepts of relevance and reliability, thereby ensuring that the substance of the underlying transactions or other events is reported. Specific accounting policies applied are disclosed in sections where the related balance or financial statement matter is disclosed.

The accrual basis of accounting has been used in the preparation of these financial statements, except for the cash flow information, whereby assets, liabilities, equity, income and expenses are recognised in the reporting period to which they relate, regardless of when cash is received or paid.

The financial statements are based on the historical cost convention unless a different measurement basis is specifically disclosed in the notes to the financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The financial statements are in Australian dollars. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest thousand dollars unless otherwise specified. Minor discrepancies in tables between totals and the sum of components are due to rounding.

Judgements, estimates and assumptions are required to be made about the carrying values of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated judgements are based on professional judgement derived from historical experience and various other factors that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and also in future periods that are affected by the revision. Judgements and assumptions made by management in the application of AAS's that have significant effects on the financial statements and estimates relate to:

- the fair value of land, buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1)
- the determination of depreciation for buildings, infrastructure, plant and equipment (refer to Note 6.1)
- the determination of employee provisions (refer to Note 5.4)
- the determination of landfill provisions (refer to Note 5.4)
- the determination of whether performance obligations are sufficiently specific so as to determine whether an arrangement is within the scope of AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* or AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* (refer to Note 3)
- the determination, in accordance with AASB 16 *Leases*, of the lease term, the estimation of the discount rate when not implicit in the lease and whether an arrangement is in substance short-term or low value
- whether or not AASB 1059 *Service Concession Arrangements: Grantors* is applicable
- other areas requiring judgements.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 1. Overview (continued)

Unless otherwise stated, all accounting policies are consistent with those applied in the prior year. Where appropriate, comparative figures have been amended to accord with current presentation, and disclosure has been made of any material changes to comparatives.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)
Income and expenses are recognised net of the amount of associated GST. Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is included with other receivables or payables in the balance sheet.

1.2 Impact of emergencies and natural disasters

Following a severe weather event in August-September 2024, Council received a grant of $1.6m from the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action as part of the 2024 Severe Weather Event Recovery Funding. This is for design and construction of a coastal protection structure on Viaduct Road. Council spent $62,780 of this grant in 2025-26, with the remainder held as income in advance to complete the project in future years.

1.3 Impacts of other external events

Council has considered ongoing external events that have contributed to volatility in international markets, disrupted global supply chains and increased inflationary pressure, including the risk that they may cause significant changes in the carrying values of assets and liabilities in the next financial year, and has concluded that there is no material impact on the 2025-26 financial report that requires additional disclosure.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2. Analysis of our results

Note 2.1 Performance against budget

The performance against budget notes compare Council's financial plan, expressed through its annual budget, with actual performance. The *Local Government* (*Planning and Reporting*) *Regulations 2020* requires explanation of any material variances. Council has adopted a materiality threshold of greater than 10 percent and at least $500,000 where further explanation is warranted. Explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality threshold unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

These notes are prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020.*

2.1.1 Income / Revenue and expenditure

	Budget 2026 $ '000	Actual 2026 $ '000	Variance $ '000	Variance %	Ref
Income / Revenue					
Rates and charges	50,471	50,953	482	1%	
Statutory fees and fines	2,642	2,745	103	4%	
User fees	19,932	20,771	839	4%	
Grants - operating	16,255	21,435	5,180	32%	1
Grants - capital	5,768	1,827	(3,941)	(68)%	2
Contributions - monetary	3,477	3,264	(213)	(6)%	
Contributions - non monetary	5,000	9,513	4,513	90%	3
Net gain on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	344	–	(344)	(100)%	7
Other income	2,656	3,918	1,262	48%	4
Total income / revenue	106,545	114,426	7,881	7%	
Expenses					
Employee costs	46,843	47,707	(864)	(2)%	
Materials and services	30,296	36,214	(5,918)	(20)%	5
Depreciation	20,456	23,298	(2,842)	(14)%	6
Depreciation - right of use assets	544	497	47	9%	
Allowance for impairment losses	153	311	(158)	(103)%	
Borrowing costs	191	140	51	27%	
Finance costs - leases	48	43	5	10%	
Net loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	–	1,943	(1,943)	∞	7
Other expenses	517	953	(436)	(84)%	
Total expenses	99,048	111,106	(12,058)	(12)%	
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	7,497	3,320	(4,177)	(56)%	

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.1 Performance against budget (continued)

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref	Explanation
1.	Council recognised operating grant revenue of $5.18m above budget, primarily due to the timing of grant receipts and the release of grant funding as project milestones were achieved. Council received $4.8m, representing 80% of the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission funding for 2026–27, in advance. This was partially offset by $1.6m of grant income budgeted for 2025–26 that was received in the prior year. A further $1.6m of grant revenue was recognised as funding was released following achievement of project milestones, including $944k relating to the Coastal Connect shared service project with the remaining variance relating to smaller movements across various programs. Council also received additional funding not included in the original budget, including $703k Commonwealth retention grant funding for early learning centre employees and $275k of Primary Producer grant funding.
2.	Council recognised capital grants $3.9m lower than budget. This is due to $4.9m for the Shipwreck Bay Key Worker Accommodation project budgeted but not received. This is offset by grants received in prior years being released as project achieved milestones or completion including: $882k for roads, $92k for the airport, $67k for the Port of Warrnambool.
3.	Contributions are budgeted at an estimated aggregate amount of $5m, as it is not practical to accurately forecast contributions at an individual project or development level due to the timing and variability of development activity. The most significant contributions received this year relate to Northern Edge Estate $2.8m, Riverside Estate $1.3m, Wollaston Road upgrades $1.3m, Horne Road Industrial Estate $1.4m, Hollingsworth Estate $1.1m.
4.	Council received other income of $1.2m above budget, primarily due to $600k of additional interest income resulting from higher interest rates and investment balances held during the year than anticipated in the budget. Volunteer labour of $417k was also recognised, which was not included in the original budget, with the remaining variance relating to smaller movements across various programs.
5.	Materials expenditure was over budget due to expensing of capital works above budget for infrastructure services ($1.7m) and the Coastal Connect shared service project ($2.8m). Budget rollovers from 2024–25 into 2025–26, incorporated through the revised budget rather than the adopted budget, contributed $1.2m to the variance. Additional expenditure of $300k was incurred during the year from new grant funding that was not included in the budget.
6.	Depreciation expense was higher than budget, primarily due to increases in the Buildings – Specialised category of $1.5m, reflecting the revaluation of buildings in the prior year and the resulting increase in the depreciable cost base. Depreciation for Parks, Open Space and Streetscape is $2m higher than budget, including approximately $500k of additional depreciation relating to the $14m of previously unrecorded assets identified this year together with the revaluation of this asset class in 2025–26.
7.	The budget included a net gain of $344k on the sale of plant and equipment, compared with an actual net loss of $1.9m. The net loss on disposal was primarily due to the impact of infrastructure demolitions, including $464k relating to Roads, $143k to Parks and Open Space, and $571k to Recreational, Leisure and Community Facilities. Council also disposed of the Koroit Street properties for proceeds of $1.2m, resulting in a net loss on disposal of $1m due to the properties having a carrying value of $2.2m.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.1 Performance against budget (continued)

2.1.2 Capital works

	Budget 2026 $ '000	Actual 2026 $ '000	Variance $ '000	Variance %	Ref
Property					
Buildings specialised	11,720	1,449	(10,271)	(88)%	1
Buildings non-specialised	–	19	19	∞	
Total property	11,720	1,468	(10,252)	(87)%	
Plant and equipment					
Plant, machinery and equipment	1,791	1,520	(271)	(15)%	
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	–	222	222	∞	
Computers and telecommunications	3,732	121	(3,611)	(97)%	2
Library books	177	261	84	47%	
Other	20	15	(5)	(25)%	
Total plant and equipment	5,720	2,139	(3,581)	(63)%	
Infrastructure					
Roads	13,157	5,934	(7,223)	(55)%	3
Bridges	450	636	186	41%	
Footpaths and cycleways	2,058	888	(1,170)	(57)%	4
Drainage	877	610	(267)	(30)%	
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	2,055	14	(2,041)	(99)%	5
Parks, open space and streetscapes	402	725	323	80%	
Aerodromes	70	–	(70)	(100)%	
Other infrastructure	95	1,485	1,390	1,463%	6
Total infrastructure	19,164	10,292	(8,872)	(46)%	
Total capital works expenditure	36,604	13,899	(22,705)	(62)%	
Represented by:					
New asset expenditure	6,055	2,132	(3,923)	(65)%	7
Asset renewal expenditure	10,705	6,934	(3,771)	(35)%	8
Asset upgrade expenditure	19,844	4,833	(15,011)	(76)%	9
Total capital works expenditure	36,604	13,899	(22,705)	(62)%	

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.1 Performance against budget (continued)

(i) Explanation of material variations

Variance Ref	Explanation
1.	Capital works expenditure was below budget during the year, primarily due to the timing and deferral of several significant projects. The $2.1m Matron Swinton project has not commenced, with Council continuing advocacy for the project and awaiting confirmation and receipt of government funding. The $5.2m Shipwreck Bay Key Worker Accommodation project has also been delayed pending a Council decision and confirmation of funding, with delivery now expected in 2026–27. Several key projects have been delayed, with $2.7m of budgeted expenditure carried forward for completion in 2026–27. These projects include the Aquazone roof replacement, which has been rescheduled to align with other key renewal projects, Civic Centre accessibility upgrades, the Council Pound upgrade and ongoing works at Alveston House.
2.	The budget included a carried forward amount of $965k and $2.3m for the Coastal Connect shared service project. The project incurred expenditure of $2.8m during 2025-26 which has been recognised as an expense as it does not meet the recognition criteria for an asset. Separately, the budget included $500k for IT projects, which will be carried forward to 2026–27 as Council's contribution towards the delivery of Phase 2 of the Coastal Connect shared service.
3.	Roads capital expenditure was below budget primarily due to the delayed delivery of the $5.1m Wollaston Road Duplication project, which remains subject to receipt of grant funding to commence the project. The budgeted $2.2m project to relocate high-voltage powerlines at Wollaston Road is nearing completion, with anticipated savings of approximately $1.2 million. Expenditure of $1m incurred to date has been capitalised as Other infrastructure rather than Road infrastructure, resulting in a variance between the budgeted and reported road capital expenditure (Refer note 6).
4.	CBD footpath capital works were $390k below budget due to delays associated with AusNet CBD gasworks, which impacted the timing of planned works. The remaining budget will be carried forward to 2026–27 for delivery of the outstanding works.
5.	Recreational, leisure and community facilities capital expenditure was below budget; however, actual capital expenditure was higher than the reported variance, with $428k of costs capitalised to other asset classes on completion, including plant and equipment, artwork, furniture and fittings, and building capital works. The 2025-26 budget included a general minor works allocation, with the final asset classification not known at the time the budget was prepared. A $250k variance relates to Aquazone improvements, which have been rescheduled for completion in 2026–27 to align with other planned building projects. The $193k Outdoor Netball Court Reseal project has also been delayed to 2026–27 due to a change in scope and associated increase in costs. Several projects were impacted by unsuccessful grant funding applications. The $750k Friendly Society's irrigation project will not proceed, while the $134k Davison Oval lighting and power upgrade has been delayed pending further consideration of funding. In addition, the $150k Flagstaff Hill capital works budget carried forward from the prior year will not proceed.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.1 Performance against budget (continued)

6. Other Infrastructure capital expenditure includes $1m relating to the Wollaston Road high-voltage powerline relocation project, which was budgeted under Road Infrastructure (Refer note 3 above).

   Additional expenditure includes $134k for the completion of the Civic Centre backup generator replacement. A further $114k of expenditure relates to works at Viaduct Road. Council received funding for the design and construction of a coastal protection structure at Viaduct Road after the 2025–26 budget was prepared, resulting in additional capital expenditure during the year. It is expected this project to be completed during 2026-27.

7. The variance in new capital projects compared with budget primarily reflects the $5.1m Shipwreck Key Worker Housing project not proceeding during the year (per Note 1). This was partially offset by expenditure on several smaller projects not budgeted as new, including the construction of the new Timor/Ryot Street roundabout of $853k, installation of the Civic Centre backup generator $134k and construction of the Queens Road Pump Track $140k.

8. Renewal expenditure was below budget due to the timing and reclassification of several projects. Building renewal expenditure was $282k below budget, with a further $535k of building renewal projects delayed as outlined in Note 1.

   Fleet renewal expenditure was $230k below budget due to lower replacement costs during the year. Council's $300k contribution towards Phase 2 of the Coastal Connect project has also been carried forward to 2026–27 (per Note 2).

   Drainage and Road renewal expenditure was below budget, with $205k of drainage expenditure and $1.7m of road expenditure instead incurred on upgrades that had been budgeted as renewal expenditure.

9. Incomplete projects to be carried forward and delivered in future years include Buildings $4.7m (per Note 1), Recreational upgrades of $1.5m (per Note 5) and $6.3m expenditure relating to the Wollaston Road upgrade and relocation of power lines (per Note 3). The budget included the Coastal Connect shared service budget of $3.2M. Project expenditure of $2.8m incurred during 2025-26 has been expensed (per Note 2).

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.2 Analysis of Council results by program

2.2.1 Analysis of Council results by program

Council delivers its functions and activities through the following programs.

City Futures
The City Futures directorate is required to plan, facilitate and deliver growth of population, jobs and investment but with the added responsibility of maintaining the liveability of Warrnambool for residents and visitors. City Futures has a key role in engaging business and all tiers of government, as well as supporting regional growth in business and tourism.

The City Futures directorate provides many services including tourism development and destination marketing, visitor information centre, holiday parks, Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village, Warrnambool Art Gallery, The Lighthouse Theatre, economic development and investment, business support, events and promotions, regional skilled migration programs (including the Great South Coast Designated Area Migration Agreement), city statutory planning and development, strategic planning to cater for new residential and commercial/industrial growth, development engineering services, building services, environmental health services, local laws, immunisation and open space planning.

The directorate also has responsibility for supporting and adding value to the city's international relationships with Miura (Japan) and Changchun (China).

City Infrastructure & Environment
The City Infrastructure and Environment directorate provides Infrastructure and Environmental services across the following categories, capital works, asset management, waste management, environment and sustainability services, services to the Port of Warrnambool and the management of the Warrnambool Regional Airport. The directorate also assists in facility management and oversight of the council cleaning contract, security contract and essential safety measures contract, through the building services team included in the strategic assets and projects branch. City Infrastructure and Environment took over the operational responsibilities for the Warrnambool Animal Shelter, from 1 July 2024.

The directorate provides engineering services including investigation, design, road safety projects, project management and supervision of key infrastructure projects. Strategy and policy advice is provided to council along with technical services and advice to the community. This service also provides contract management, and oversight of the city's road, drainage and footpath networks, parks, recreational and sporting facilities, and fleet. City Infrastructure also takes responsibility for playground renewals, accessible parking, and project management advice. The engineering services team oversee the traffic management plans to accommodate significant regional projects such as the Warrnambool Base Hospital upgrade.

Whilst the development engineering function has moved into the City Futures directorate to align with the development planning function, the Engineering Services team continue to assist with approvals where necessary through the provision of advice.

The Environment and Sustainability branch is responsible for various environmental programs, such as coastal protection programs, vegetation management programs, selected revegetation activities and facilitates environmental projects in accordance with the Warrnambool 2040 plan. The Circular Economy team, who also operate within this branch are responsible for managing the waste, recycling and Food Organics, Green Organics (FOGO) contracts. This requires the development and implementation of education programs to reduce volumes to landfill and reduce contamination in the various recycling streams.

The 2025-26 financial year saw the Project Management Team oversee capital works of $11.7m, including large volumes of renewal works on key asset categories such as roads, footpaths and parks, open spaces and playgrounds. It also saw the completion of construction of Beach Access 123 and the commencement and progression of a number of multi-year projects including the Key Worker Accomodation Project at Shipwreck Bay, Rock Revetment works on Viaduct Road, and the delivery of road and footpath projects in the CBD as well as the Koroit Street Roundabout near the Warrnambool Base Hospital. The team also delivered works towards the Wollaston Road Power relocation, completed the CBD Bus interchange and several road safety projects with support from the Safe Local Roads and Streets Program, including the renewal works at Botanic Road.

City Wellbeing
The City Wellbeing directorate plans for and provides a broad range of strategies, plans and policies, programs and services across social, cultural, community, recreational and educational services, children and family services and community facilities to support residents and users of all ages and stages of life.

Services in the Directorate include:

Children & Family Services - Maternal Child Health, Parenting and Children's Intervention and Support Services (PACS), Parenting Advice and Education Services, Integrated Family Services, Early Years Customer Service and Administration; Early Learning Centres, Family Day Care, 3 & 4 year old Kindergarten, Preschool Field Officer Program, Inclusion and Care.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.2 Analysis of Council results by program (continued)

Recreation & Culture - Warrnambool Library and Learning Centre, Community Arts; Aquazone; Warrnambool Stadium; Recreation facilities and sports grounds; recreation participation and activation; Grants Management and administration of several municipal funding programs.

Community Strengthening - Home care services including HACC PYP Assessment, Personal Care, Domestic Assistance, Respite Care, Social Support, Home Maintenance and Modifications, and Meals on Wheels; Community Support services such as Volunteer Connect, Community programs, Youth Services, West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House; Archie Graham Community Centre: Public meeting spaces, Community centre programs, commercial kitchen and café, and Hydrotherapy pool, along with support for strategic areas of public, social and community policy that impact on community development within the City including the development and implementation of the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and Council's Reconciliation Action Plan.

The Directorate receives funding from a variety of sources including Fee for service, State and Federal Government departments in order to subsidise, deliver and/or support Council services and facilities provided. The Directorate also works in partnership with a range of Government departments, not-for-profits and non-government agencies, private sector/philanthropic partners in order to plan, advocate, develop and/or deliver projects, programs or initiatives that achieve the community's strategic goals and aspirations.

Corporate Strategies

The Corporate Strategies directorate is largely responsible for servicing the administrative and legislative needs of other directorates with back-of-house systems and other support.

The Financial Services branch provides budgeting, reporting and accounting support to other branches of the organisation, as well as rates and revenue, procurement, business improvement, and fleet support.

The Communications branch supports external and internal stakeholder management, council reporting, coordination of the Council Plan, community engagement services and manages our customer service centre.

The Organisational Development branch provides human resources support to other internal branches, manages training and payroll services, and oversees Council's occupational health and safety and risk areas.

The Information Technology Services branch provides IT management and support to all Council branches and facilities, digital transformation programs and business process improvements.

Executive

The Executive branch encompasses the Elected Council and the Chief Executive Officer's office, providing overall leadership and governance for the organisation. The Elected Council sets the strategic direction and policy framework for Warrnambool, representing the interests of the community and making key decisions on priorities and resources. The CEO is responsible for implementing Council's decisions and ensuring the effective delivery of services and initiatives in line with Council's strategic objectives. The Executive branch oversees and coordinates all directorates, ensuring strong organisational performance, accountability, and alignment with the vision and goals of Council.

The Executive branch also contains the Governance, Records, and Property functions. The Governance function supports the organisation by ensuring sound decision-making processes, compliance with statutory obligations, and the maintenance of transparent and ethical practices. The Records team manages Council's information assets and recordkeeping systems, supporting legislative compliance and efficient access to information. The Property team oversees Council's property portfolio, providing strategic management of leases, licences, acquisitions, and disposals, as well as supporting the use and maintenance of Council-owned and managed land and buildings.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 2.2 Analysis of Council results by program (continued)

2.2.2 Summary of income / revenue, expenses, assets and capital expenses by program

Functions/activities	Income / Revenue $ '000	Expenses $ '000	Surplus / (Deficit) $ '000	Grants included in income / revenue $ '000	Total assets $ '000
2026					
Corporate Strategies	76,070	38,770	37,300	9,740	75,335
City Infrastructure & Environment	3,433	26,324	(22,891)	2,099	831,988
City Wellbeing	20,427	25,855	(5,428)	10,434	16,430
City Futures	13,731	18,094	(4,363)	989	12,069
Executive	765	2,063	(1,298)	–	–
Total functions and activities	114,426	111,106	3,320	23,262	935,822
2025					
Corporate Strategies	77,157	34,907	42,250	9,245	66,422
City Infrastructure & Environment	4,184	27,917	(23,733)	2,196	779,660
City Wellbeing	19,466	23,816	(4,350)	10,230	16,253
City Futures	15,137	16,569	(1,432)	1,111	5,229
Executive	711	1,513	(802)	–	–
Total functions and activities	116,655	104,722	11,933	22,782	867,564

The 2025 asset figure has been updated in line with the restated balance sheet.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000

3.1 Rates and charges

Council uses Capital Improved Value (CIV) as the basis of valuation of all properties within the municipal district. The CIV of a property is its imputed market value.

The valuation base used to calculate general rates for 2025/26 was $11.227 billion (2024/25: $11.590 billion).

Residential Rates	26,562	25,428
Waste management charge	7,890	7,499
Commercial rates	5,902	5,776
Municipal charge	5,983	5,712
Industrial rates	2,207	2,032
Vacant Land rates	1,651	1,576
Urban farm rates	509	476
Interest on rates and charges	171	142
Cultural and recreational land rates	78	74
Total rates and charges	50,953	48,715

The date of the general revaluation of land for rating purposes within the municipal district was 1 January 2025 and the valuation was first applied in the rating year commencing 1 July 2025.

Annual rates and charges are recognised as income when Council issues annual rates notices. Supplementary rates are recognised when a valuation and reassessment is completed and a supplementary rates notice issued.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
3.2 User fees		
Children's services	5,166	4,753
Foreshore holiday parks	4,048	3,996
Regulatory control	2,329	2,139
Cultural centres	2,326	2,242
Indoor aquatic centre	2,287	2,093
Tourism and promotion	1,484	1,487
Property management	1,022	922
Multi Purpose Sports Stadium	780	685
Aged services fees	714	654
Livestock exchange	–	50
Other fees and charges	615	501
Total user fees	20,771	19,522
User fees by timing of revenue recognition		
User fees recognised at a point in time	20,771	19,522
Total user fees	20,771	19,522

User fees are recognised as revenue at a point in time, or over time, when (or as) the performance obligation is satisfied. Recognition is based on the underlying contractual terms.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000

3.3 Funding from other levels of government

Grants were received in respect of the following:

Summary of grants		
Commonwealth funded grants	11,270	11,211
State funded grants	11,992	11,571
Total grants received	23,262	22,782
(a) Operating Grants		
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Aged Services	2,187	2,094
Victoria Grants Commission - Financial Assistance Grant	6,295	6,943
Victoria Grants Commission - Local roads	1,312	1,344
Recurrent - State Government		
Family and children	5,912	5,799
Pension rebate	878	848
Cultural centres	673	693
Aged services	567	641
School crossing supervision	283	274
Port operations	97	97
Environment initiatives	94	88
Other	150	225
Total recurrent operating grants	18,448	19,046
Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Other	704	75
Non-recurrent - State Government		
Family and children	554	710
Cultural centres	66	101
Infrastructure services	51	72
Environment initiatives	145	71
Economic development	–	60
Aged services	–	14
Recreation	3	–
Other	1,464	260
Total non-recurrent operating grants	2,987	1,363
Total operating grants	21,435	20,409

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
(b) Capital Grants		
Recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Roads to recovery	293	260
Total recurrent capital grants	293	260
Non-recurrent - Commonwealth Government		
Infrastructure services	437	495
Other	42	–
Non-recurrent - State Government		
Infrastructure services	916	1,019
Other	62	324
Recreation	9	182
Port operations	68	93
Total non-recurrent capital grants	1,534	2,113
Total capital grants	1,827	2,373

(c) Recognition of grant income

Before recognising funding from government grants as revenue the Council assesses whether there is a contract that is enforceable and has sufficiently specific performance obligations in accordance with AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*. When both these conditions are satisfied, the Council:

- identifies each performance obligation relating to revenue under the contract/agreement
- determines the transaction price
- recognises a contract liability for its obligations under the agreement
- recognises revenue as it satisfies its performance obligations, at the time or over time when services are rendered.

Where the contract is not enforceable and/or does not have sufficiently specific performance obligations, the Council applies AASB 1058 *Income for Not-for-Profit Entities.*

Grant revenue with sufficiently specific performance obligations is recognised over time as the performance obligations specified in the underlying agreement are met. Where performance obligations are not sufficiently specific, grants are recognised on the earlier of receipt or when an unconditional right to receipt has been established. Grants relating to capital projects are generally recognised progressively as the capital project is completed. The following table provides a summary of the accounting framework under which grants are recognised.

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
Income recognised under AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*		
General purpose	18,799	18,688
Specific purpose grants to acquire non-financial assets	1,209	1,022
Other specific purpose grants	2,769	2,371
Revenue recognised under AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers*		
Specific purpose grants	485	701
	23,262	22,782

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
(d) Unspent grants received on condition that they be spent in a specific manner:		
Operating		
Balance at start of year	2,567	2,167
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	2,432	1,914
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(2,138)	(1,514)
Balance at year end	2,861	2,567
Capital		
Balance at start of year	3,219	2,052
Received during the financial year and remained unspent at balance date	723	1,717
Received in prior years and spent during the financial year	(1,667)	(550)
Balance at year end	2,275	3,219

Unspent grants are determined and disclosed on a cash basis.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
3.4 Contributions		
Monetary contributions		
Monetary	3,264	3,278
Total monetary contributions	3,264	3,278
Non-monetary contributions		
Non-monetary	9,513	13,942
Total non-monetary contributions	9,513	13,942
Total contributions	12,777	17,220
Roads	5,147	6,826
Drainage	2,359	4,836
Footpaths and cycleways	1,668	1,988
Bridges	242	292
Parks open spaces and streetscapes	97	–
Total non-monetary contributions	9,513	13,942

Monetary and non monetary contributions are recognised as income at their fair value when Council obtains control over the contributed asset.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 3. Funding for the delivery of our services (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
3.5 Other income		
Interest	2,483	2,584
Reimbursements	689	2,463
Recognition of in-kind volunteer support	418	370
Infrastructure services	144	196
Family and community	31	8
Recreation and cultural programs	3	4
Other	150	99
Total other income	3,918	5,724

Interest is recognised as it is earned.

Other income is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable and is recognised when Council gains control over the right to receive the income.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 4. The cost of delivering services

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
4.1 Employee costs		
(a) Employee costs		
Wages and salaries	41,089	37,830
Superannuation	4,757	4,208
WorkCover	1,541	1,084
Fringe benefits tax	320	339
Total employee costs	47,707	43,461
(b) Superannuation		
Council made contributions to the following funds:		
Defined benefit fund		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	180	184
	180	184
Accumulation funds		
Employer contributions to Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (Vision Super)	2,611	2,392
Employer contributions - other funds	1,966	1,632
	4,577	4,024
Total superannuation costs	4,757	4,208
Employer contributions payable at reporting date	–	358

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Council makes the majority of its employer superannuation contributions in respect of its employees to the Local Authorities Superannuation Fund (the Fund). This Fund has two categories of membership, accumulation and defined benefit, each of which is funded differently. Obligations for contributions to the Fund are recognised as an expense in the Comprehensive Income Statement when they are made or due.

Defined benefit fund

Council makes employer contributions to the defined benefit category of the Fund at rates determined by the Trustee on the advice of the Fund Actuary. As of 30 June 2026, there were 15 employees in the defined benefit fund.

On the basis of the results of the 2025 interim actuarial investigation conducted by the Fund Actuary, Council makes employer contributions to the Fund's Defined Benefit category at rates determined by the Fund's Trustee. For the year ended 30 June 2026, this rate was 12% of members' salaries (2025: 11.5%). This rate is expected to increase in line with any increases in the SG contribution rate and was reviewed as part of the 30 June 2023 triennial valuation.

As at 30 June 2026, a triennial actuarial investigation is underway as the Fund provides lifetime pensions in the Defined Benefit category. It is expected to be completed by 31 October 2026. The VBI is used as the primary funding indicator. Because the VBI was above 100%, the 30 June 2025 actuarial investigation determined the Defined Benefit category was in a satisfactory financial position and that no change was necessary to the Defined Benefit category's funding arrangements from prior years. Vision Super has advised that the VBI at 30 June 2026 was 116.9%. Warrnambool City Council was notified of the 30 June 2026 VBI during August 2026 (2025: August 2025).

Accumulation funds

Employer contributions to accumulation funds are normally based on a fixed percentage of employee earnings; for the year ended 30 June 2026, this was 12.0% as required under Superannuation Guarantee (SG) legislation (2025: 11.5%).

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 4. The cost of delivering services (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
4.2 Materials and services		
Corporate services	10,128	8,615
Infrastructure services	8,121	10,945
Recreation and cultural services	5,339	5,137
Waste management	4,920	4,503
Children's services	1,646	1,427
Tourism and promotion	1,548	1,727
Aged services	1,209	973
Health and local laws	1,191	1,099
Foreshore caravan parks	940	809
Family day care	97	93
Livestock Exchange	49	222
Other	1,026	858
Total materials and services	36,214	36,408

Expenses are recognised as they are incurred and reported in the financial year to which they relate.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 4. The cost of delivering services (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
4.3 Depreciation		
Property		
Land improvements	140	24
Buildings - specialised	5,427	3,960
Buildings - non specialised	93	38
Building improvements	47	34
Total depreciation - property	5,707	4,056
Plant and equipment		
Plant machinery and equipment	1,372	1,238
Computers and telecomms	239	559
Library books	106	141
Fixtures fittings and furniture	89	92
Total depreciation - plant and equipment	1,806	2,030
Infrastructure		
Roads	7,844	8,447
Footpaths and cycleways	1,777	1,927
Drainage	1,474	1,372
Parks open spaces and streetscapes	2,996	951
Off street car parks	413	761
Aerodromes	323	527
Bridges	540	508
Recreational, leisure and community	377	203
Waste management	41	41
Other infrastructure	–	157
Total depreciation - infrastructure	15,785	14,894
Total depreciation	23,298	20,980

Refer to note 6.1 for a more detailed breakdown of depreciation charges and accounting policy.

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
4.4 Other expenses		
Recognition of in-kind volunteer support	418	370
Councillors' allowances and expenses	367	340
Auditors' remuneration - Internal Audit	103	89
Auditors' remuneration - VAGO - audit of the financial statements, performance statement and grant acquittals	65	76
Total other expenses	953	875

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
5.1 Financial assets		
(a) Cash and cash equivalents		
Current		
Cash at bank	9,760	7,175
Cash on hand	26	26
Total current cash and cash equivalents	9,786	7,201
Total cash and cash equivalents	9,786	7,201
(b) Other financial assets		
Current		
Term deposits	54,000	48,000
Total current other financial assets	54,000	48,000
Non-current		
Unlisted shares in corporations	2	2
Total non-current other financial assets	2	2
Total other financial assets	54,002	48,002
Total current financial assets	63,786	55,201
Total non-current financial assets	2	2
Total cash and cash equivalents and other financial assets	63,788	55,203

Cash and term deposits held to fund carried forward capital works.

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits at call, and other highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Other financial assets are valued at fair value, at balance date. Term deposits are measured at original cost. Any unrealised gains and losses on holdings at balance date are recognised as either a revenue or expense.

Other financial assets include term deposits and those with original maturity dates of three to 12 months are classified as current, whilst term deposits with maturity dates greater than 12 months are classified as non-current.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
(c) Trade & Other Receivables		
Current		
Statutory receivables		
Rates debtors	1,969	1,631
Infringement debtors	2,338	2,014
Allowance for expected credit loss - infringements	(1,630)	(1,353)
GST receivable	369	277
Non-statutory receivables		
Development and buildings	84	22
Animals	147	122
Child care	12	21
TAFE	56	77
Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (previously Fire Service Levy)	17	15
Loans and advances to community organisations	9	9
Other debtors	1,726	1,892
Allowance for expected credit loss - other debtors	(43)	(35)
Total current trade and other receivables	5,054	4,692
Total trade and other receivables	5,054	4,692

Short term receivables are carried at invoice amount. An allowance for expected credit losses is recognised based on past experience and other objective evidence of expected losses. Long term receivables are carried at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
5.2 Payables, and contract and other liabilities		
(a) Trade and other payables		
Current		
Non-statutory payables		
Accrued expenses	3,477	2,702
Trade payables	530	977
Statutory payables		
Net GST payable	–	16
Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund liability (previously Fire Service Levy liability)	2,202	1,461
Total current trade and other payables	6,209	5,156
Other refundable deposits	146	–
(b) Contract and other liabilities		
Contract liabilities		
Current		
Grants received in advance - operating	2,861	2,567
Grants received in advance - capital	2,275	3,219
Total contract liabilities	5,136	5,786
Other liabilities		
Other income in advance	230	–
Total other liabilities	230	–
Total current contract and other liabilities	5,366	5,786
Total contract and other liabilities	5,366	5,786

Contract liabilities
Contract liabilities reflect consideration received in advance from customers in respect of which Council is yet to meet its obligations.Contract liabilities are derecognised and recorded as revenue when promised goods and services are transferred to the customer. Refer to Note 3.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
5.3 Interest-bearing liabilities		
Current		
Treasury Corporation of Victoria borrowings - secured	538	520
Other borrowings - secured	587	973
Total current interest-bearing liabilities	1,125	1,493
Non-current		
Treasury Corporation of Victoria borrowings - secured	2,992	3,530
Other borrowings - secured	1,224	1,811
Total non-current interest-bearing liabilities	4,216	5,341
Total	5,341	6,834

Borrowings are secured by Council rates.

a) The maturity profile for Council's borrowings is:

Not later than one year	1,125	1,493
Later than one year and not later than five years	3,575	4,081
Later than five years	641	1,260
Total	5,341	6,834

Borrowings are initially measured at fair value, being the cost of the interest bearing liabilities, net of transaction costs. The measurement basis subsequent to initial recognition depends on whether the Council has categorised its interest-bearing liabilities as either financial liabilities designated at fair value through the profit and loss, or financial liabilities at amortised cost. Any difference between the initial recognised amount and the redemption value is recognised in net result over the period of the borrowing using the effective interest method.

The classification depends on the nature and purpose of the interest bearing liabilities. The Council determines the classification of its interest bearing liabilities based on contractual repayment terms at every balance date.

In classifying borrowings as current or non-current Council considers whether at balance date it has the right to defer settlement of the liability for at least twelve months after the reporting period. Council's loan arrangements include covenants based on Council's financial performance and position at the end of the reporting period. These covenants are assessed for compliance after the reporting period based on specified financial ratios.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	Employee provisions $ '000	Landfill restoration $ '000	Total $ '000
5.4 Provisions			
2026			
Balance at the beginning of the financial year	8,378	315	8,693
Additional provisions	3,936	–	3,936
Amounts used	(3,497)	(57)	(3,554)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	(16)	(17)	(33)
Balance at the end of the financial year	8,801	241	9,042
Provisions			
Provisions - current	7,981	80	8,061
Provisions - non-current	820	161	981
Total Provisions	8,801	241	9,042
2025			
Balance at the beginning of the financial year	7,814	385	8,199
Additional provisions	3,934	–	3,934
Amounts used	(3,369)	(79)	(3,448)
Change in the discounted amount arising because of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate	(1)	9	8
Balance at the end of the financial year	8,378	315	8,693
Provisions			
Provisions - current	7,596	79	7,675
Provisions - non-current	782	236	1,018
Total Provisions	8,378	315	8,693

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
(a) Employee provisions		
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled within 12 months		
Annual leave	2,443	2,566
Long service leave	587	571
	3,030	3,137
Current provisions expected to be wholly settled after 12 months		
Annual leave	333	136
Long service leave	4,618	4,323
	4,951	4,459
Total current employee provisions	7,981	7,596
Non-Current		
Long service leave	820	782
Total Non-Current Employee Provisions	820	782
Aggregate Carrying Amount of Employee Provisions:		
Current	7,981	7,596
Non-current	820	782
Total Aggregate Carrying Amount of Employee Provisions	8,801	8,378

The calculation of employee costs and benefits includes all relevant on-costs and are calculated as follows at reporting date.

Annual leave
A liability for annual leave is recognised in the provision for employee benefits as a current liability because the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of the liability. Liabilities for annual leave are measured at:
- nominal value if the Council expects to wholly settle the liability within 12 months
- present value if the Council does not expect to wholly settle within 12 months.

Liabilities that are not expected to be wholly settled within 12 months of the reporting date are recognised in the provision for employee benefits as current liabilities, measured at the present value of the amounts expected to be paid when the liabilities are settled using the remuneration rate expected to apply at the time of settlement.

Long service leave
Liability for long service leave (LSL) is recognised in the provision for employee benefits. Unconditional LSL is disclosed as a current liability as the Council does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement. Unconditional LSL is measured at nominal value if expected to be settled within 12 months or at present value if not expected to be settled within 12 months. Conditional LSL that has been accrued, where an employee is yet to reach a qualifying term of employment, is disclosed as a non-current liability and measured at present value.

Key assumptions:		
- wage inflation rate	4.15%	4.25%
- discount rate	4.74%	4.20%

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
5.5 Financing arrangements		
The Council has the following funding arrangements in place as at 30 June 2026.		
Other facilities - bank loans and leases	2,867	4,425
Treasury Corporation of Victoria facilities	3,530	4,050
Bank overdraft	200	200
Credit card facilities	150	150
Total Facilities	6,747	8,825
Used facilities	6,457	8,510
Used facilities	6,457	8,510
Unused facilities	290	315

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 5. Investing in and financing our operations (continued)

5.6 Commitments

The Council has entered into the following commitments. Commitments are not recognised in the Balance Sheet. Commitments are disclosed at their nominal value and presented inclusive of the GST payable.

(a) Commitments for expenditure

	Not later than 1 year $ '000	Later than 1 year and not later than 2 years $ '000	Later than 2 years and not later than 5 years $ '000	Later than 5 years $ '000	Total $ '000
2026					
Operating					
Recycling collection	1,642	–	–	–	1,642
Waste collection	2,360	–	–	–	2,360
Consultancies	326	49	51	–	426
Food and organics collection	1,094	–	–	–	1,094
Glass collection	703	–	–	–	703
Transactional banking	22	–	–	–	22
Cleaning services	866	430	–	–	1,296
Security Services	289	241	–	–	530
Parking Services	47	–	–	–	47
Internal Audit	55	–	–	–	55
Meals for delivery	489	–	–	–	489
Information technology	347	347	347	–	1,041
Total	8,240	1,067	398	–	9,705
Capital					
Information technology	–	–	–	–	–
Infrastructure	1,023	–	–	–	1,023
Total	1,023	–	–	–	1,023
2025					
Operating					
Recycling collection	1,293	–	–	–	1,293
Waste collection	2,395	–	–	–	2,395
Consultancies	1,039	85	–	–	1,124
Food and organics collection	1,147	–	–	–	1,147
Glass collection	590	–	–	–	590
Transactional banking	64	66	–	–	130
Cleaning services	792	807	217	–	1,816
Security Services	287	293	557	–	1,137
Parking Services	67	–	–	–	67
Internal Audit	70	36	–	–	106
Meals for delivery	432	445	–	–	877
Information technology	159	100	–	–	259
Total	8,335	1,832	774	–	10,941
Capital					
Information technology	20	–	–	–	20
Infrastructure	540	–	–	–	540
Total	560	–	–	–	560

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage

6.1 Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment

Summary of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	Carrying amount 30 June 2025 $ '000	Additions $ '000	Contributions $ '000	Revaluation $ '000	Disposal $ '000	Depreciation $ '000	Write-off $ '000	Transfers $ '000	Carrying amount 30 June 2026 $ '000
Property	277,815	441	–	2,036	(2,075)	(5,707)	–	1,580	274,090
Plant and equipment	23,693	2,032	–	(2)	(174)	(1,806)	–	958	24,701
Infrastructure	482,878	1,947	9,513	63,817	(1,475)	(15,785)	(5)	11,115	552,005
Work in progress	18,812	9,479	–	–	–	–	(2,070)	(13,653)	12,568
Total	803,198	13,899	9,513	65,851	(3,724)	(23,298)	(2,075)	–	863,364

Summary of Work in Progress	Opening WIP $ '000	Additions $ '000	Write-off $ '000	Transfers $ '000	Closing WIP $ '000
Property	3,463	1,027	(1,215)	(2,234)	1,041
Plant and equipment	428	107	(409)	45	171
Infrastructure	14,921	8,345	(446)	(11,464)	11,356
Total	18,812	9,479	(2,070)	(13,653)	12,568

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

	Land specialised $ '000	Land non specialised $ '000	Land improve-ments $ '000	Total land and land improve-ments $ '000	Buildings specialised $ '000	Buildings non specialised $ '000	Building improve-ments $ '000	Total buildings $ '000	Work in progress $ '000	Total property $ '000
Property										
At fair value 1 July 2025	119,876	1,560	1,051	122,487	229,962	4,869	1,240	236,071	3,463	362,021
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	–	–	(511)	(511)	(78,651)	(1,402)	(179)	(80,232)	–	(80,743)
	119,876	1,560	540	**121,976**	151,311	3,467	1,061	**155,839**	3,463	**281,278**
Movements in fair value										
Additions	–	–	–	–	423	18	–	441	1,027	1,468
Revaluation	–	–	2,243	2,243	–	–	69	69	–	2,312
Disposal	(11)	(1,040)	(106)	(1,157)	(462)	(1,168)	60	(1,570)	–	(2,727)
Write-off	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	(1,215)	(1,215)
Transfers	–	–	–	–	1,563	–	17	1,580	(2,234)	(654)
	(11)	(1,040)	2,137	**1,086**	1,524	(1,150)	146	**520**	(2,422)	**(816)**
Movements in accumulated depreciation										
Depreciation	–	–	(140)	(140)	(5,427)	(93)	(47)	(5,567)	–	(5,707)
Disposals	–	–	42	42	355	433	(177)	611	–	653
Revaluation	–	–	(265)	(265)	–	–	(11)	(11)	–	(276)
	–	–	(363)	**(363)**	(5,072)	340	(235)	**(4,967)**	–	**(5,330)**
At fair value 30 June 2026	119,865	520	3,188	123,573	231,486	3,719	1,386	236,591	1,041	361,205
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	–	–	(874)	(874)	(83,723)	(1,062)	(414)	(85,199)	–	(86,073)
Carrying amount	119,865	520	2,314	**122,699**	147,763	2,657	972	**151,392**	1,041	**275,132**

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

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	Plant machinery and equipment $ '000	Fixtures fittings and furniture $ '000	Computers and telecomms $ '000	Library books $ '000	Paintings and exhibits $ '000	Total $ '000	Work in progress $ '000	Total plant and equipment $ '000
Plant and Equipment								
At cost 1 July 2025	12,059	5,787	7,173	708	15,906	41,633	429	42,062
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	(6,676)	(5,122)	(5,782)	(360)	–	(17,940)	–	(17,940)
	5,383	665	1,391	348	15,906	**23,693**	429	**24,122**
Movements in carrying value								
Additions	1,487	165	107	261	12	2,032	107	2,139
Revaluation	–	(5)	–	–	–	(5)	–	(5)
Disposal	(1,307)	–	–	(328)	–	(1,635)	–	(1,635)
Write-off	–	–	–	–	–	–	(409)	(409)
Transfers	–	400	479	–	79	958	45	1,003
	180	560	586	(67)	91	**1,350**	(257)	**1,093**
Movements in accumulated depreciation								
Depreciation	(1,372)	(89)	(239)	(106)	–	(1,806)	–	(1,806)
Disposals	1,203	–	–	258	–	1,461	–	1,461
Revaluation	–	3	–	–	–	3	–	3
	(169)	(86)	(239)	152	–	**(342)**	–	**(342)**
At cost 30 June 2026	12,239	6,347	7,759	641	15,997	42,983	172	43,155
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	(6,845)	(5,208)	(6,021)	(208)	–	(18,282)	–	(18,282)
Carrying amount	5,394	1,139	1,738	433	15,997	**24,701**	172	**24,873**

Plant and equipment are carried at historical cost.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

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	Roads $ '000	Bridges $ '000	Foot-paths and cycle-ways $ '000	Drainage $ '000	Recreati-on, leisure, communi-ty $ '000	Waste manage-ment $ '000	Parks, open spaces, streetsca-pes $ '000	Aerodro-mes $ '000	Off street car parks $ '000	Other infra-structure $ '000	Total $ '000	Work in progress $ '000	Total infra-structure $ '000
Infrastructure													
At fair value 1 July 2025	392,612	50,817	70,318	150,340	10,247	606	38,849	10,546	20,379	5,508	750,222	14,921	765,143
Accumulated depreciation at 1 July 2025	(154,266)	(8,244)	(26,718)	(47,134)	(5,018)	(255)	(11,903)	(2,111)	(9,458)	(2,238)	(267,345)	–	(267,345)
	238,346	42,573	43,600	103,206	5,229	351	26,946	8,435	10,921	3,270	**482,877**	14,921	**497,798**
Movements in fair value													
Additions	847	262	261	202	14	–	361	–	–	–	1,947	8,345	10,292
Contributions and Found Assets	5,147	242	1,668	2,359	–	–	97	–	–	–	9,513	–	9,513
Revaluation	48,153	–	1,933	5,857	8,319	–	31,342	5,565	2,430	–	103,599	–	103,599
Disposal	(1,683)	–	(336)	(97)	(664)	–	(1,052)	(82)	(287)	–	(4,201)	–	(4,201)
Write-off	(5)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	(5)	(446)	(451)
Transfers	3,658	1	3,437	757	54	–	5,922	–	7	(2,721)	11,115	(11,465)	(350)
	56,117	505	6,963	9,078	7,723	–	36,670	5,483	2,150	(2,721)	**121,968**	(3,566)	**118,402**
Movements in accumulated depreciation													
Depreciation	(7,844)	(540)	(1,777)	(1,474)	(377)	(41)	(2,996)	(323)	(413)	–	(15,785)	–	(15,785)
Disposals	1,219	–	188	27	93	–	908	33	258	–	2,726	–	2,726
Transfers	–	–	(30)	–	–	–	(172)	–	–	202	–	–	–
Revaluation	(28,456)	–	(884)	(1,954)	(599)	–	(4,547)	(2,084)	(1,258)	–	(39,782)	–	(39,782)
	(35,081)	(540)	(2,503)	(3,401)	(883)	(41)	(6,807)	(2,374)	(1,413)	202	**(52,841)**	–	**(52,841)**
At fair value 30 June 2026	448,729	51,322	77,281	159,418	17,970	606	75,519	16,029	22,529	2,787	872,190	11,355	883,545
Accumulated depreciation at 30 June 2026	(189,347)	(8,784)	(29,221)	(50,535)	(5,901)	(296)	(18,710)	(4,485)	(10,871)	(2,036)	(320,186)	–	(320,186)
Carrying amount	259,382	42,538	48,060	108,883	12,069	310	56,809	11,544	11,658	751	**552,004**	11,355	**563,359**

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

Acquisition
Initial measurement
Council initially measures its property, infrastructure, plant and equipment assets at cost. The cost of an acquired asset is the fair value of the consideration that Council has provided at the date of acquisition plus any incidental costs attributable to the acquisition.
Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. Refer to Note 8.4 for more information on how Council measures fair value.

Where assets are constructed by Council, cost includes all materials used in construction, direct labour, borrowing costs incurred during construction, and an appropriate share of directly attributable variable and fixed overheads.

In accordance with Council's policy, the threshold limits have applied when recognising assets within an applicable asset class and unless otherwise stated are consistent with the prior year.

	Depreciation Period years	Threshold Limit $ ´000
Asset recognition thresholds and depreciation periods		
Land and land improvements		
Land	n/a	–
Land improvements	10 - 200 years	5
Buildings		
Buildings	20 - 150 years	5
Building improvements	25 - 60 years	1
Leasehold improvements	10 - 20 years	1
Plant and Equipment		
Plant, machinery and equipment	3 - 40 years	1
Fixtures, fittings and furniture	2 - 25 years	5
Computers and telecommunications	5 - 30 years	2
Paintings and exhibits	n/a	–
Infrastructure		
Roads	16 - 80 years	5
Bridges	30 - 200 years	5
Footpaths and cycleways	10 - 80 years	5
Drainage	20 - 200 years	1
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	20 - 80 years	1
Parks, open spaces and streetscapes	15 - 80 years	5
Off street car parks	16 - 60 years	5
Aerodromes	16 - 80 years	1
Other infrastructure	20 - 80 years	5

Land under roads
Council recognises land under roads it controls at fair value from 1 January 2008.

Depreciation
Buildings, land improvements, plant and equipment, infrastructure, and other assets having limited useful lives are systematically depreciated over their useful lives to the Council in a manner, which reflects consumption of the service potential embodied in those assets. Estimates of remaining useful lives and residual values are made on a regular basis with major asset classes reassessed annually. Depreciation rates and methods are reviewed annually.

Where assets have separate identifiable components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned distinct useful lives and residual values and a separate depreciation rate is determined for each component.

Road earthworks are not depreciated on the basis that they are assessed as not having a limited useful life.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

Straight line depreciation is charged based on the residual useful life as determined each year.

Depreciation periods used are listed above and are consistent with the prior year unless otherwise stated.

Repairs and maintenance
Where the repair relates to the replacement of a component of an asset and the cost exceeds the capitalisation threshold the cost is capitalised and depreciated. The carrying value of the replaced asset is expensed.

Valuation of land and buildings

Land - Non-specialised and Specialised
Valuation of non-specialised and specialised land was undertaken by Mr Aaron Armistead (API Registration No 18353), Preston Rowe Patterson in 2024. The review was conducted in accordance with relevant accounting standards and under official guidance from the Victorian Valuer-General's office.

Land Improvements were indexed at 30 June 2026. The basis for the indexation was the review of costs associated with capital works undertaken by Council by Julie Anderson, Acting Director Infrastructure and Environment.

Buildings - Non-specialised
Valuation of non-specialised buildings was undertaken by a qualified independent valuer, Mr Aaron Armistead, Preston Rowe Patterson in 2025. The valuation of land and buildings is at fair value, being market value based on highest and best use permitted by relevant land planning provisions. Where land use is restricted through existing planning provisions the valuation is reduced to reflect this limitation. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

Buildings - Specialised
Valuation of specialised buildings was undertaken by a qualified independent valuer, Mr Aaron Armistead, Preston Rowe Patterson in 2025. The valuation of land and buildings is at fair value, being market value based on highest and best use permitted by relevant land planning provisions. Where land use is restricted through existing planning provisions the valuation is reduced to reflect this limitation. This adjustment is an unobservable input in the valuation. The adjustment has no impact on the comprehensive income statement.

The date and type of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

Details of the Council's land and buildings and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2026 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of valuation	Type of Valuation
Land - non specialised	–	520	–	Jun-24	Full
Land - specialised	–	–	119,865	Jun-24	Full
Land improvements	–	–	2,314	Jun-26	Indexed
Buildings - non-specialised	–	2,657	–	Jun-25	Full
Buildings - specialised	–	–	147,763	Jun-25	Full
Building improvements	–	–	972	Jun-24	Indexed
Total	–	3,177	270,914		

Valuation of Infrastructure
Valuation of Bridge infrastructure assets have been determined in accordance with an independent valuation undertaken by Mr Joshua Baulch, LGA Bridge Support.

The following asset classes were indexed as at 30 June 2026: Roads, footpaths and cycleways, recreational, leisure and community facilities, waste management, parks, open space and streetscapes, aerodromes, off street carparks and other. The basis for the indexation was the review of costs associated with capital works undertaken by Council by Julie Anderson, Acting Director Infrastructure and Environment.

Indexed valuation of Open Space Assets was undertaken by Asset Lab Pty Ltd in 2026. The review was conducted using the Fair Value framework under AASB 13. Open space assets are considered specialised assets for which there is generally no active market. As a result, the valuation adopted a Level 3 fair value methodology using the Replacement Cost Approach.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 6. Assets we manage (continued)

Drainage was indexed as at 31 March 2026 based on Construction Cost Index.

Waste Management and Other Infrastructure are not currently scheduled for regular revaluations. Council will continute to monitor the carrying values of these assets and assess whether a revaluation is required.

The date and type of the current valuation is detailed in the following table.

The valuation is at fair value based on current replacement cost less accumulated depreciation as at the date of valuation.

Details of the Council's infrastructure and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 30 June 2026 are as follows:

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Date of valuation	Type of Valuation
Roads	–	–	259,382	Jun-26	Indexed
Bridges	–	–	42,538	Jun-25	Full
Footpaths and cycleways	–	–	48,060	Jun-26	Indexed
Drainage	–	–	108,883	Mar-26	Indexed
Recreational, leisure & community facilities	–	–	12,069	Jun-26	Indexed
Waste management	–	–	310	Jun-24	Indexed
Parks, open space & streetscapes	–	–	56,809	Jun-26	Indexed
Aerodromes	–	–	11,544	Jun-26	Indexed
Off street car parks	–	–	11,658	Jun-26	Indexed
Other	–	–	751	Jun-24	Indexed
Total	–	–	552,004		

Description of significant unobservable inputs into level 3 valuations

Specialised land and land under roads is valued using a market based direct comparison technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the extent and impact of restriction of use and the market cost of land per square metre. The extent and impact of restrictions on use varies and results in a reduction to surrounding land values between 70% and 95%. The market value of land varies significantly depending on the location of the land and the current market conditions. Currently land values range between $0.05 and $1,400.00 per square metre.

Specialised buildings are valued using a current replacement cost technique. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of buildings. Current replacement costs are calculated on a square metre basis and ranges from $250.00 to $20,000.00 per square metre. The remaining useful lives of buildings are determined on the basis of the current condition of buildings and vary from 20 years to 150 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of buildings are sensitive to changes in expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of buildings.

Infrastructure assets are valued based on the current replacement cost. Significant unobservable inputs include the current replacement cost and remaining useful lives of infrastructure. The remaining useful lives of infrastructure assets are determined on the basis of the current condition of the asset and vary from 10 years to 200 years. Replacement cost is sensitive to changes in market conditions, with any increase or decrease in cost flowing through to the valuation. Useful lives of infrastructure are sensitive to changes in use, expectations or requirements that could either shorten or extend the useful lives of infrastructure assets.

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
Reconciliation of specialised land		
Land under roads	5,361	5,372
Crown land	44,493	44,493
Council freehold land	70,011	70,011
Total specialised land	119,865	119,876

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. People and relationships

7.1 Council and key management remuneration

(a) Related Parties

Parent entity
Warrnambool City Council is the parent entity.

(b) Key Management Personnel

Key management personnel (KMP) are those people with the authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of Warrnambool City Council. The Councillors, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Directors are deemed KMP.

Details of KMP at any time during the year are:

Councillors	Councillor Ben Blain (Mayor) Councillor Matt Walsh (Deputy Mayor 17 November 2025 to 30 June 2026) Councillor Vicki Jellie (Deputy Mayor 1 July 2025 to 17 November 2025) Councillor Debbie Arnott Councillor Willy Benter Councillor Billy Edis Councillor Richard Ziegeler
Chief Executive Officer	Mr Andrew Mason
Key Management Personnel	Director - City Futures Mr Luke Coughlan Director - City Infrastructure & Environment Mr David Leahy (1 July 2025 - 5 December 2025) Acting Director - City Infrastructure & Environment Ms Julie Anderson (from 8 December 2025) Director - City Wellbeing Ms Brooke Love Director - Corporate Strategies Mr Peter Utri

	2026 No.	2025 No.
Total Number of Councillors	7	10
Total of Chief Executive Officer and other Key Management Personnel	6	5
Total Number of Key Management Personnel	13	15

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. People and relationships (continued)

(c) Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

Remuneration comprises employee benefits including all forms of consideration paid, payable or provided by Council, or on behalf of the Council, in exchange for services rendered. Remuneration of Key Management Personnel and Other senior staff is disclosed in the following categories.

Short-term employee benefits include amounts such as wages, salaries, annual leave or sick leave that are usually paid or payable on a regular basis, as well as non-monetary benefits such as allowances and free or subsidised goods or services.

Other long-term employee benefits include long service leave, other long service benefits or deferred compensation.

Post-employment benefits include pensions, and other retirement benefits paid or payable on a discrete basis when employment has ceased.

Termination benefits include termination of employment payments, such as severance packages.

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
Total remuneration of key management personnel was as follows:		
Short-term employee benefits	1,542	1,519
Other long-term employee benefits	29	29
Post-employment benefits	136	118
Total	1,707	1,666

	2026 No.	2025 No.
The numbers of key management personnel whose total remuneration from Council and any related entities, fall within the following bands:		
$1 - $9,999	–	1
$10,000 - $19,999	–	2
$20,000 - $29,999	–	3
$30,000 - $39,999	4	2
$40,000 - $49,999	2	–
$50,000 - $59,999	–	1
$110,000 - $119,999	1	1
$120,000 - $129,999	2	–
$240,000 - $249,999	3	3
$250,000 - $259,999	–	1
$360,000 - $369,999	1	1
Total	13	15

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. People and relationships (continued)

(d) Remuneration of other senior staff

Other senior staff are officers of Council, other than Key Management Personnel, whose total remuneration exceeds $170,000 and who report directly to a member of the KMP.

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
Total remuneration of other senior staff was as follows:		
Short-term employee benefits	1,114	481
Post-employment benefits	131	54
Other long-term employee benefits	27	11
Termination benefits	–	–
Total	1,272	546

	2026 No.	2025 No.
The number of other senior staff are shown below in their relevant income bands:		
Income Range:		
$170,000 - $179,999	4	2
$180,000 - $189,999	2	–
$200,000 - $209,999	1	1
Total	7	3

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
Total remuneration for the reporting year for other senior staff included above, amounted to:	1,272	546

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 7. People and relationships (continued)

7.2 Related party disclosure

(a) Transactions with related parties

During the period Council entered into the following transactions with related parties:

Councillor	Related Party	Nature of Relationship	Terms and Conditions	Nature of Transaction	Aggregate Total
Cr Benter	Apollo Industries	Controlled entity	Commercial	Providing construction materials	$1,350

(b) Outstanding balances with related parties

The following balances are outstanding at the end of the reporting period in relation to transactions with related parties:

2026 - Nil (2025 - Nil).

(c) Loans to/from related parties

The aggregate amount of loans in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the council to a related party as follows:

2026 - Nil (2025 - Nil).

(d) Commitments to/from related parties

The aggregate amount of commitments in existence at balance date that have been made, guaranteed or secured by the council to a related party are as follows:

2026 - Nil (2025 - Nil).

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. Managing uncertainties

8.1 Contingent assets and liabilities

Contingent assets and contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet, but are disclosed and if quantifiable, are measured at nominal value. Contingent assets and liabilities are presented inclusive of GST receivable or payable, respectively.

(a) Contingent assets

Contingent assets are possible assets that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council.

Construction of infrastructure assets by developers in the course of creating new subdivisions results in the infrastructure assets being vested in Council when Council issues a Statement of Compliance.

At reporting date, developers had commenced construction of assets that will eventually be transferred to Council contingent upon Council issuing a Statement of Compliance.

Due to the nature of the arrangements in place and the assets involved, a contingent asset amount cannot be reliably measured prior to completion.

(b) Contingent liabilities

Contingent liabilities are:
- possible obligations that arise from past events, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Council; or
- present obligations that arise from past events but are not recognised because:
- it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation; or
- the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Superannuation
Council has obligations under a defined benefit superannuation scheme that may result in the need to make additional contributions to the scheme, matters relating to this potential obligation are outlined below. As a result of the volatility in financial markets the likelihood of making such contributions in future periods exists.

Road Transport Contractual Chain Order
The Fair Work Commission issued an urgent Road Transport Contractual Chain Order (RTCCO), effective from 21 April 2026, which required mandatory fortnightly fuel-rate adjustments for certain transport supply chains.

Council has considered the potential impact of the RTCCO on its transport and waste service contracts. While contractors may have had an entitlement to seek retrospective fuel-rate adjustments for the period in which the Order applied, as at 30 June 2026 Council had not received any formal claims or retrospective adjustment requests from its contractors.

The mandatory fuel-rate adjustment requirements ceased to apply from 7 June 2026 following the reduction in average diesel prices below the applicable threshold. Council is not aware of any outstanding claims at 30 June 2026 and, accordingly, no provision has been recognised in the financial statements.

A contingent liability may arise if contractors subsequently submit retrospective claims relating to the period in which the RTCCO applied. The potential financial impact cannot be reliably estimated at the reporting date.

EPA Notice
The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) issued an Environmental Action Notice requiring the removal of contaminated soil and waste from a property. A resident has alleged that Council caused or contributed to the contamination through historic landfill activities and management of the adjoining road reserve and is seeking recovery from Council of remediation, consultant and associated costs pursuant to section 274(6) of the *Environment Protection Act 2017*.

The Environmental Action Notice remains ongoing and the potential financial impact on Council cannot currently be reliably determined. MAV Insurance has advised that indemnity will not be provided in relation to the Environmental Action Notice or any associated remediation costs.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

Liability Mutual Insurance
Council is a participant of the MAV Liability Mutual Insurance (LMI) Scheme. The LMI scheme provides public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover. The LMI scheme states that each participant will remain liable to make further contributions to the scheme in respect of any insurance year in which it was a participant to the extent of its participant's share of any shortfall in the provision set aside in respect of that insurance year, and such liability will continue whether or not the participant remains a participant in future insurance years.

MAV Workcare
Council was a participant of the MAV WorkCare Scheme. The MAV WorkCare Scheme provided workers compensation insurance. MAV WorkCare commenced business on 1 November 2017 and the last day the Scheme operated as a self-insurer was 30 June 2021. In accordance with the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013*, there is a six year liability period following the cessation of the Scheme (to 30 June 2027). During the liability period, adjustment payments may be required (or received). The determination of any adjustment payments is dependent upon revised actuarial assessments of the Scheme's tail claims liabilities as undertaken by WorkSafe Victoria. If required, adjustments will occur at the 3-year and 6-year points during the liability period, and will affect participating members.

Gallagher Bassett is a direct provider appointed by WorkSafe Victoria to provide workers compensation insurance and have been appointed as Council's agent since the closure of the MAV WorkeCare Scheme.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

(c) Guarantees for loans to other entities

The amount disclosed for financial guarantee in this note is the nominal amount of the underlying loan that is guaranteed by the Council, not the fair value of the financial guarantee.

Financial guarantee contracts are not recognised as a liability in the balance sheet unless the lender has exercised their right to call on the guarantee or Council has other reasons to believe that it is probable that the right will be exercised.

The Council acts as guarantor in respect of bank loans provided to the following clubs and community groups:

Entity and Institution	Original Loan $'000	Balance of borrowings 2026 $'000	2025 $'000
Warrnambool Returned Services Club - Commonwealth Bank *	2,091	2,023	2,116
Warrnambool Football Netball Club - Commonwealth Bank	322	202	299
Old Collegians Football Netball Club - NAB	100	72	77
Dennington Football Netball Club - Bendigo Bank	49	16	21

* During 2025-26, the Warrnambool Returned Services Club informed Council of changes to its loan facilities, reducing the amount of Counci's guarantee from $2,744m to $2,091m.

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8.2 Australian Accounting Standards issued but not yet effective

Certain new Australian Accounting Standards and interpretations have been published that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2026 reporting period. Council assesses the impact of these new standards.

The Australian Accounting Standards Board (AASB) has issued AASB 18 *Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements.* When applicable AASB 18 supersedes AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements.* AASB 18 aims to improve how entities communicate in their financial statements, with a focus on information about financial performance in the statement of profit or loss. It is expected to result in presentation and disclosure changes, primarily to Council's Comprehensive Income Statement. AASB 18 is expected to first apply to Council for the 2028-29 financial year.

8.3 Financial instruments

(a) Objectives and policies

The Council's principal financial instruments comprise cash assets, term deposits, receivables (excluding statutory receivables), payables (excluding statutory payables) and bank and/or TCV borrowings. Details of the significant accounting policies and methods adopted, including the criteria for recognition, the basis of measurement and the basis on which income and expenses are recognised, in respect of each class of financial asset, financial liability and equity instrument is disclosed in the notes of the financial statements. Risk management is carried out by senior management under policies approved by the Council. These policies include identification and analysis of the risk exposure to Council and appropriate procedures, controls and risk minimisation.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

(b) Market risk

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of Council financial instruments will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. The Council's exposure to market risk is primarily through interest rate risk with only insignificant exposure to other price risks and no exposure to foreign currency risk.

Interest rate risk

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. Council's interest rate liability risk arises primarily from long term loans and borrowings at fixed rates which exposes Council to fair value interest rate risk. Cash flow interest rate risk is the risk that the future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Council has minimal exposure to cash flow interest rate risk through its cash and deposits that are at floating rates.

Investment of surplus funds is made with approved financial institutions under the *Local Government Act 2020*.
Council manages interest rate risk by adopting an investment policy that ensures:

- diversification of investment product;
- monitoring of return on investment; and
- benchmarking of returns and comparison with budget.

There has been no significant change in the Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing interest rate risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

Interest rate movements have not been sufficiently significant during the year to have an impact on the Council's year end result.

(c) Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk that a contracting entity will not complete its obligations under a financial instrument and cause Council to make a financial loss. Council has exposure to credit risk on some financial assets included in the balance sheet. Particularly significant areas of credit risk exist in relation to outstanding fees and fines as well as loans and receivables from sporting clubs and associations. To help manage this risk:

- Council has a policy for establishing credit limits for the entities Council deals with;
- Council may require collateral where appropriate; and
- Council only invests surplus funds with financial institutions which have a recognised credit rating specified in Council's investment policy.

Receivables consist of a large number of customers, spread across the ratepayer, business and government sectors. Credit risk associated with the Council's financial assets is minimal because the main debtor is secured by a charge over the rateable property.

There are no material financial assets which are individually determined to be impaired.

Council may also be subject to credit risk for transactions which are not included in the balance sheet, such as when Council provides a guarantee for another party. Details of our contingent liabilities are disclosed in Note 8.1(b).

The maximum exposure to credit risk at the reporting date to recognised financial assets is the carrying amount, net of any allowance for impairment of those assets, as disclosed in the balance sheet and notes to the financial statements. Council does not hold any collateral.

(d) Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of Council's operational liquidity requirements it will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction when required or will be forced to sell a financial asset at below value or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset.

To help reduce these risks Council:

- has a liquidity policy which targets a minimum and average level of cash and cash equivalents to be maintained;
- has readily accessible standby facilities and other funding arrangements in place;
- has a liquidity portfolio structure that requires surplus funds to be invested within various bands of liquid instruments;

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

- monitors budget to actual performance on a regular basis; and
- sets limits on borrowings relating to the percentage of loans to rate revenue and percentage of loan principal repayments to rate revenue.

The Council's maximum exposure to liquidity risk is the carrying amounts of financial liabilities as disclosed on the face of the balance sheet and the amounts related to financial guarantees disclosed in Note 8.1(c), and is deemed insignificant based on prior periods' data and current assessment of risk.

There has been no significant change in Council's exposure, or its objectives, policies and processes for managing liquidity risk or the methods used to measure this risk from the previous reporting period.

With the exception of borrowings, all financial liabilities are expected to be settled within normal terms of trade. Details of the maturity profile for borrowings are disclosed at Note 5.3.

Unless otherwise stated, the carrying amounts of financial instruments reflect their fair value.

(e) Sensitivity disclosure analysis

Taking into account past performance, future expectations, economic forecasts, and management's knowledge and experience of the financial markets, Council believes the following movements are 'reasonably possible' over the next 12 months:

- A shift of + 1 % and - 1 % in market interest rates (AUD) from year-end rates of 4.35%.

These movements will not have a material impact on the valuation of Council's fianncial assets and liabilities, nor will they have a material impact on the results of Council's operations.

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8.4 Fair value measurement

Fair Value Hierarchy
Council's financial assets and liabilities are not valued in accordance with the fair value hierarchy, Council's financial assets and liabilities are measured at amortised cost.

Council measures certain assets and liabilities at fair value where required or permitted by Australian Accounting Standards. AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement* aims to improve consistency and reduce complexity by providing a definition of fair value and a single source of fair value measurement and disclosure requirements for use across Australian Accounting Standards. For assets where Council adopts a current replacement cost approach to determine fair value, Council considers the inclusion of site preparation costs, disruption costs and costs to restore another entity's assets in the underlying valuation.

All assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within a fair value hierarchy, described as follows, based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole:

Level 1 — Quoted (unadjusted) market prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities
Level 2 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is directly or indirectly observable; and
Level 3 — Valuation techniques for which the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement is unobservable.

For the purpose of fair value disclosures, Council has determined classes of assets and liabilities on the basis of the nature, characteristics and risks of the asset or liability and the level of the fair value hierarchy as explained above.
In addition, Council determines whether transfers have occurred between levels in the hierarchy by re-assessing categorisation (based on the lowest level input that is significant to the fair value measurement as a whole) at the end of each reporting period.

Revaluation
Subsequent to the initial recognition of assets, non-current physical assets, other than plant and equipment, are measured at their fair value, being the price that would be received to sell an asset (or paid to transfer a liability) in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. (For plant and equipment carrying amount is considered to approximate fair value given short useful lives). At balance date, the Council reviewed the carrying value of the individual classes of assets measured at fair value to ensure that each asset materially approximated its fair value. Where the carrying value materially differed from the fair value at balance date, the class of asset was revalued.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 8. Managing uncertainties (continued)

Fair value valuations are determined in accordance with a valuation hierarchy. Changes to the valuation hierarchy will only occur if an external change in the restrictions or limitations of use of an asset result in changes to the permissible or practical highest and best use of the asset. In addition, Council undertakes a formal revaluation of land, buildings, and infrastructure assets on a regular basis ranging from 1 to 5 years. The valuation is performed either by experienced council officers or independent experts. The following table sets out the frequency of revaluations by asset class.

Asset Class	**Revaluation frequency**
Land	1 to 5 years
Buildings	1 to 4 years
Roads	1 to 4 years
Bridges	1 to 5 years
Footpaths and cycleways	1 to 5 years
Drainage	1 to 5 years
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	1 to 5 years
Waste management	1 to 5 years
Parks, open space and streetscapes	1 to 4 years
Aerodromes	1 to 5 years
Other infrastructure	1 to 5 years

Where the assets are revalued, the revaluation increases are credited directly to the asset revaluation reserve except to the extent that an increase reverses a prior year decrease for that class of asset that had been recognised as an expense in which case the increase is recognised as revenue up to the amount of the expense. Revaluation decreases are recognised as an expense except where prior increases are included in the asset revaluation reserve for that class of asset in which case the decrease is taken to the reserve to the extent of the remaining increases. Within the same class of assets, revaluation increases and decreases within the year are offset.

Impairment of assets

At each reporting date, the Council reviews the carrying value of its assets to determine whether there is any indication that these assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs of disposal and value in use, is compared to the assets carrying value. Any excess of the assets carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the comprehensive income statement, unless the asset is carried at the revalued amount in which case, the impairment loss is recognised directly against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that same class of asset. The impairment policy above does not apply to Council's property, infrastructure, specialised buildings and other non-current physical assets subsequently measured at fair value. These are primarily non-cash generating assets of not-for-profit entities, which are typically specialised in nature and held for continuing use of their service capacity. Their recoverable amount is expected to be materially the same as fair value determined under AASB 13 *Fair Value Measurement*, with the consequence that AASB 136 *Impairment of Assets* does not apply to such assets that are regularly revalued.

8.5 Events occurring after balance date

No matters have occurred after balance date that require disclosure in the financial report.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. Other matters

	Balance at beginning of reporting period $ '000	Increase (decrease) $ '000	Balance at end of reporting period $ '000
9.1 Reserves			
(a) Asset revaluation reserves			
2026			
Property			
Land and Improvements	83,427	1,979	85,406
Buildings - Specialised	120,776	–	120,776
Buildings - non specialised	1,883	–	1,883
Building improvements	–	58	58
	206,086	2,037	208,123
Plant and equipment			
Artworks	5,286	–	5,286
	5,286	–	5,286
Infrastructure			
Roads	181,085	19,697	200,782
Bridges	32,853	–	32,853
Footpaths and cycleways	7,208	1,049	8,257
Drainage	44,525	3,903	48,428
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	104	7,720	7,824
Parks, open space and streetscapes	3,253	26,793	30,046
Aerodromes	833	3,481	4,314
Offstreet car parks	3,227	1,172	4,399
Other infrastructure	24,824	–	24,824
	297,912	63,815	361,727
Total asset revaluation reserves	509,284	65,852	575,136

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. Other matters (continued)

	Balance at beginning of reporting period $ '000	Increase (decrease) $ '000	Balance at end of reporting period $ '000
2025			
Property			
Land and Improvements	83,427	–	83,427
Buildings - Specialised	125,929	(5,153)	120,776
Buildings - non specialised	–	1,883	1,883
	209,356	(3,270)	206,086
Plant and equipment			
Artworks	5,187	99	5,286
	5,187	99	5,286
Infrastructure			
Roads	185,337	(4,252)	181,085
Bridges	27,540	5,313	32,853
Footpaths and cycleways	7,208	–	7,208
Drainage	40,549	3,976	44,525
Recreational, leisure and community facilities	115	(11)	104
Parks, open space and streetscapes	3,253	–	3,253
Aerodromes	1,019	(186)	833
Offstreet car parks	3,227	–	3,227
Other infrastructure	25,903	(1,079)	24,824
	294,151	3,761	297,912
Total asset revaluation reserves	508,694	590	509,284

The asset revaluation reserve is used to record the increased (net) value of Council's assets over time.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. Other matters (continued)

	Balance at beginning of reporting period $ '000	Transfer from Accumulated Surplus $ '000	Transfer to Accumulated Surplus $ '000	Balance at end of reporting period $ '000
(b) Other reserves				
2026				
Main drainage fund	426	1,336	(1,307)	455
Committed reserve	17,493	7,339	(11,867)	12,965
Heritage restoration fund	52	2	–	54
Art gallery reserve	53	3	–	56
Resort and recreation reserve	902	184	–	1,086
Car park fund	151	604	(474)	281
North of the Merri developer contribution reserve	877	584	(1,154)	307
Hopkins Point Road developer contribution reserve	561	–	–	561
North East growth area developer contribution reserve	1,812	1,758	(1,739)	1,831
Horne Road developer contribution reserve	1,803	250	–	2,053
North Dennington developer contribution reserve	319	–	(303)	16
Total Other reserves	24,449	12,060	(16,844)	19,665
2025				
Main drainage fund	507	1,296	(1,377)	426
Committed reserve	12,453	5,741	(701)	17,493
Heritage restoration fund	50	2	–	52
Art gallery reserve	51	2	–	53
Resort and recreation reserve	732	170	–	902
Car park fund	–	743	(592)	151
North of the Merri developer contribution reserve	555	1,719	(1,397)	877
Hopkins Point Road developer contribution reserve	452	109	–	561
North East growth area developer contribution reserve	1,521	508	(217)	1,812
Small infrastructure fund	35	–	(35)	–
Horne Road developer contribution reserve	1,303	500	–	1,803
North Dennington developer contribution reserve	–	319	–	319
Total Other reserves	17,659	11,109	(4,319)	24,449

Main Drainage Fund is maintained specifically for future major drainage works.
Committed Reserve is specifically for future works and funds may be retained in the Committed Reserve where they remain committed to their intended purpose but there is no current-year budget or approved rollover for delivery.
Heritage Restoration Fund is maintained specifically for grant loans for heritage works.
Art Gallery Reserve is maintained specifically for the purchase of art pieces.
Resort and Recreation Reserve is maintained specifically for public open space works.
Car Park Fund is maintained specifically for future major car park works.
North of the Merri Developer Contributions Reserve is maintained specifically for contributions held in this growth area.
Hopkins Point Road Developer Contributions Reserve is maintained specifically for contributions held in this growth area.
Northeast Developer Contributions Reserve is maintained specifically for contributions held for this growth area.
Horne Road Developer Contributions Reserve is maintained specifically for contributions held for the Horne Road Industrial Estate.
North Dennington Developer Contribution Reserve is maintained specifically for contributions held for this growth area.

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 9. Other matters (continued)

	2026 $ '000	2025 $ '000
9.2 Reconciliation of cash flows from operating activities to surplus		
Surplus for the year	3,320	11,933
Non-cash adjustments:		
Add / (deduct) non-cash items:		
Depreciation	23,795	21,466
Loss on disposal of property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	1,943	1,982
Contributions - Non-monetary assets	(9,513)	(13,942)
Prior year WIP written off	2,075	4,175
Bad and doubtful debts expense	311	302
Interest on lease liabilities	43	45
Change in assets and liabilities:		
Increase in trade and other receivables	(673)	(741)
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	(84)	3
Decrease in prepayments	65	94
Increase in other assets	377	379
Decrease/(increase) in trade and other payables	1,053	(22)
Increase in provisions	349	494
(Decrease)/increase in other liabilities	91	(41)
Increase/(decrease) in contract and other liabilities	(420)	1,567
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	22,732	27,694

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Warrnambool City Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2026

Note 10. Changes in accounting policies

There have been no changes to accounting policies in the 2025-26 year.

Note 11. Errors and changes in accounting estimates

11.1 Correction of error/s relating to a previous reporting period – retrospective

Nature of prior-period adjustments:

1. Recognition of previously unrecorded found assets

During the current year, Council found assets that existed at the reporting date but had not previously been recognised in the asset register. The gross carrying amount and associated accumulated depreciation of these assets have been recognised as a prior period adjustment. Comparative balances have been restated to reflect the recognition of these assets as at 1 July 2024 with a net carrying amount of $10.6 million.

2. Building Revaluation 30 June 2025

Council identified that work in progress costs incurred prior to 1 July 2024 had not been incorporated into the carrying amount of certain buildings during the 2025 building revaluation process. The affected building assets have been correctly revalued at 30 June 2025 at the correct carrying values. The comparative carrying amount of work in progress has been restated, with the balance written down by $1.2 million to remove costs that had already been recognised within the revalued building asset values.

3. Review of capital work in progress

During the current year, Council completed a detailed reconciliation of historical work in progress balances and identified $2.3 million of expenditure incurred prior to 1 July 2024 that should have been written down in earlier reporting periods. Comparative balances have been restated to correct the carrying amount of work in progress balances at this date.

The errors identified above have been corrected by restating the balances at the beginning of the earliest period presented (1 July 2024) and taking the adjustment through to accumulated surplus at that date.

Comparatives have been changed to reflect the correction of errors. The impact on each line item is shown in the tables below.

Changes to the opening Statement of Financial Position at 1 July 2024

	Original Balance 1 July, 2024 $ '000	Impact Increase $ '000	Restated Balance 1 July, 2024 $ '000
Statement of Financial Position			
Property, infrastructure, plant and equipment	791,964	7,015	798,979
Total assets	847,875	7,015	854,890
Total liabilities	30,231	–	30,231
Accumulated surplus	291,291	7,015	298,306
Total equity	817,644	7,015	824,659

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Warrnambool City Council

Performance Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2026

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Certification of the Performance Statement

In my opinion, the accompanying performance statement has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and *the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

_____
Ann Van Zyl
Principal Accounting Officer
Dated: XX September 2026

In our opinion, the accompanying performance statement of the *Warrnambool City Council* for the year ended 30 June 2026 presents fairly the results of council's performance in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.
The performance statement contains the relevant performance indicators, measures and results in relation to service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity.
At the date of signing, we are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars in the performance statement to be misleading or inaccurate.
We have been authorised by the council and by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* to certify this performance statement in its final form.

_____
Cr Ben Blain
Councillor
Dated: XX September 2026

_____
Cr Matthew Walsh
Councillor
Dated: XX September 2026

_____
Andrew Mason
Chief Executive Officer
Dated: XX September 2026

Victorian Auditor – General's Office Audit Report

Section 1. Description of municipality

The Warrnambool municipality covers an area of 120 sqkm and is situated in the Great South Coast region of Victoria, 263 km south-west of Melbourne.

Warrnambool City Council includes the City of Warrnambool and the townships of Allansford, Bushfield and Woodford. The estimated residential population is 36,150 and the municipality's population density was 301.25 people per square kilometre. The average household size is 2.32 and the median age is 42.

Warrnambool serves as a centre for a regional population of about 120,000 people.

It contains a TAFE college, a Deakin University campus including a School of Medicine and a base hospital which is part of South West Healthcare.

The major employment sectors are health care and social assistance, retail, manufacturing, education and training, accommodation and food services, professional services and construction.

Warrnambool has a moderate climate with an average maximum summer temperature of about 24°C, while the average winter maximum is about 14°C.

Stunning Lady Bay provides a focal point and major attraction for residents and visitors and in winter and spring the bay is home to southern right whales and their calves.

Along with the natural attractions visitors are drawn to events in Warrnambool including the speedway car racing, May Racing Carnival and surf lifesaving events.

The region also features some of Australia's most fertile agricultural land much of which is dedicated to dairy and beef production. Major dairy manufacturers and a large meat processor are situated in and around Warrnambool providing a major source of employment.

Warrnambool's total employment is estimated at more than 18,500 jobs and the city's economic output is estimated at $6.013 billion with major contributions from the following industry sectors:

Construction - $975.6 million

Manufacturing - $754.2 million

Health care and social assistance - $720.5 million

Section 2. Service performance indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Results					
	2023	2024	2025	2026		Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	
Aquatic Facilities ***Utilisation*** *Utilisation of aquatic facilities* [Number of visits to aquatic facilities / Municipal population]	5.63	5.74	5.99	N/A	6.38	Increased usage of facilities is being driven by an increase in Health & Fitness activities such as Group Fitness and Gym. Marketing initiatives have focused on increasing class and membership number to support activation of these spaces. The facility also saw a small % increase in Aquatic attendances driven by an increase in school lesson activation and general recreational swimming.
Animal Management ***Health and safety*** *Animal management prosecutions* [Number of successful animal management prosecutions / Number of animal management prosecutions] x 100	0%	0%	100%	N/A	100%	One prosecution case was pursued during the year with a successful outcome.

	2023	2024	2025	2026		Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	
Food Safety ***Health and safety*** *Critical and major non-compliance outcome notifications* *[Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises followed up / Number of critical non-compliance outcome notifications and major non-compliance notifications about a food premises] x100*	50.00%	96.63%	97.10%	N/A	97.96%	49 major or critical non-compliant notifications were received in the calendar year 2025. One remained outstanding which will be followed up in 2026.
Governance ***Satisfaction*** *Satisfaction with community consultation and engagement (community satisfaction rating out of 100 with the consultation and engagement efforts of Council)*	46	48	51	49	48	
Libraries ***Participation*** *Library membership* *[percentage of the population that are registered library members] x100*	N/A	39.79%	47.64%	N/A	55.03%	Library membership continues its trajectory of strong growth and demonstrates the value perceived by the community in the range of collections, services, programming and facilities on offer.

	2023	2024	2025	2026		Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	
Maternal and Child Health (MCH) ***Participation*** *Participation in the MCH service* *[Number of children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of children enrolled in the MCH service] x100*	79.42%	77.14%	79.00%	N/A	78.88%	
Participation *Participation in the MCH service by Aboriginal children* *[Number of Aboriginal children who attend the MCH service at least once (in the year) / Number of Aboriginal children enrolled in the MCH service] x100*	80.75%	84.02%	76.97%	N/A	81.91%	
Roads ***Condition*** *Sealed local roads below the intervention level* *(percentage of sealed local roads that are below the renewal intervention level set by Council and not requiring renewal)*	93.56%	89.69%	90.35%	89.69%	91.01%	Based on deterioration of State Roads we'd forecast at 89.69% however after our updated conditions audit on Council Roads for 2025/26 we noted the overall condition of roads maintained by Council had not deteriorated as much as budgeted.
Statutory Planning ***Service standard*** *Planning applications decided within the relevant required time* *(percentage of planning application decisions made within the relevant required time)*	66.97%	86.59%	77.56%	80.00%	80.97%	More stability in staff over the past 12 months with no vacancies.

	2023	2024	2025	2026		Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target as per budget	Actual	
Waste Management ***Waste diversion*** *Kerbside collection waste diverted from landfill* *[Weight of recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins / Weight of garbage, recyclables and green organics collected from kerbside bins] x100*	67.24%	65.45%	63.34%	64.00%	63.82%	

Section 3. Financial performance indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2026

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Target As per budget	2026 Actual	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	2030 Forecast	Material Variations and Comments
Efficiency ***Expenditure level*** *Expenses per property assessment* *[Total expenses / Number of property assessments]*	$4,724.40	$5,256.62	$5,520.98	$5,253.00	$5,756.49	$5,577.02	$5,430.23	$5,488.83	$5,597.93	Increases in Materials and Services due to current costs of materials and labour shortages, as well as higher depreciation on assets has resulted in higher cost per property assessment than targeted.
Revenue level *Average rate per property assessment* *[Sum of all general rates and municipal charges / Number of property assessments]*	$2,036.72	$2,107.11	$2,161.54	N/A	$2,218.23	$2,286.72	$2,340.45	$2,398.75	$2,458.73	Forecast period is based on estimated rate cap increase between 2.35% in 2027 and 2.50% for later years together with a 1% growth year on year in the number of property assessments over the same period.

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Target As per budget	2026 Actual	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	2030 Forecast	Material Variations and Comments
Liquidity ***Working capital*** *Current assets compared to current liabilities* *[Current assets / Current liabilities] x100*	240.47%	255.95%	273.85%	174.54%	301.98%	244.70%	252.39%	253.54%	264.06%	Council continues to hold funds committed for incomplete projects that will be delivered in the 2026/27 financial year which is expected to reduce over the forecast period as projects are completed.
Unrestricted cash *Unrestricted cash compared to current liabilities* *[Unrestricted cash / Current liabilities] x100*	-38.81%	-50.26%	-13.09%	N/A	30.98%	-28.44%	34.89%	38.96%	50.42%	Council considers the current definition of "unrestricted cash" as misleading, as it excludes investments with a maturity date of 90 days. Council held $3m of uncommitted cash in these investments as at 30 June 2026, which will be used to fund committed reserves, operations, capital works, and projects. Council uses careful and timely treasury management to maximise investment returns and ensure cash availability for its operations.

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Target As per budget	2026 Actual	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	2030 Forecast	Material Variations and Comments
Obligations ***Loans and borrowings*** *Loans and borrowings compared to rates* *[Interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100*	22.93%	18.01%	14.03%	N/A	10.48%	19.14%	15.45%	11.91%	9.56%	Council reduced its debt slightly in 2025/26 as it was able to retire historical loans. New borrowings will be considered in the 2026/27 financial year to assist with funding council's capital works plan. Council expects to retire further loans during 2029/30.
Loans and borrowings repayments compared to rates *[Interest and principal repayments on interest bearing loans and borrowings / Rate revenue] x100*	3.66%	3.84%	3.44%	N/A	3.20%	3.50%	3.79%	3.68%	2.51%	Council reduced its debt slightly in 2025/26 as it was able to retire historical loans. New borrowings will be considered in the 2026/27 financial year to assist with funding council's capital works plan. Council expects to retire further loans during 2029/30.

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Target As per budget	2026 Actual	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	2030 Forecast	Material Variations and Comments
Indebtedness *Non-current liabilities compared to own source revenue* *[Non-current liabilities / Own source revenue] x100*	14.73%	12.29%	9.67%	N/A	7.40%	12.07%	10.60%	7.98%	6.47%	Council reduced its debt slightly in 2025/26 as it was able to retire historical loans. New borrowings will be considered in the 2026/27 financial year to assist with funding council's capital works plan. Council expects to retire further loans during 2029/30.
Asset renewal and upgrade *Asset renewal and upgrade compared to depreciation* *[Asset renewal and asset upgrade expense / Asset depreciation] x100*	114.67%	74.90%	73.92%	52.33%	50.51%	127.57%	75.13%	71.95%	67.08%	Depreciation costs have increased in 2025/26 due to revaluations.

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Target As per budget	2026 Actual	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	2030 Forecast	Material Variations and Comments
Operating position Adjusted underlying result										The adjusted underlying result has decreased compared with the prior year, primarily due to increased depreciation expense following the revaluation of buildings, roads, parks, open space and streetscape assets. The result was also impacted by increased employee costs, including wage increases above the rate cap arising from Enterprise Agreement (EA) increases and the Superannuation Guarantee Charge (SGC) rate increase. These impacts were partially offset by the favourable timing of the receipt of Federal Assistance Grants. Forecast periods reflect reduced grant funding available for capital works.
Adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit) *[Adjusted underlying surplus (deficit)/ Adjusted underlying revenue] x100*	4.05%	-10.31%	-4.10%	N/A	-7.47%	-3.52%	-3.33%	-3.00%	-3.12%	

Dimension/indicator/ measure	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Actual	2026 Target As per budget	2026 Actual	2027 Forecast	2028 Forecast	2029 Forecast	2030 Forecast	Material Variations and Comments
Stability ***Rates concentration*** *Rates compared to adjusted underlying revenue* *[Rate revenue / Adjusted underlying revenue] x100*	49.54%	52.92%	48.42%	52.48%	49.29%	50.97%	53.62%	54.10%	54.35%	Council received $4.8m, representing 80% of the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission funding for 2026–27, in advance. Council recognised operating grant revenue of $5.18m above budget, primarily due to the timing of grant receipts and the release of grant funding as project milestones were achieved. A number of unbudgeted developer contributions were also received during 2025-26.
Rates effort *Rates compared to property values* *[Rate revenue / Capital improved value of rateable properties in the municipality] x100*	0.42%	0.41%	0.42%	N/A	0.45%	0.45%	0.46%	0.47%	0.48%	

Section 4. Sustainable capacity indicators

For the year ended 30 June 2026

	Results				
Indicator / measure [formula]	2023	2024	2025	2026	Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	
Population *Expenses per head of municipal population*	$2,455.97	$2,743.45	$2,896.87	$3,073.47	Increases in Materials and Services due to current costs of materials and labour shortages, as well as higher depreciation on assets has resulted in higher cost per head of municipal population
Infrastructure per head of municipal population *[Value of infrastructure / Municipal population]*	$17,353.60	$18,658.31	$18,650.26	$20,488.66	Depreciation costs have increased in 2025/26 due to revaluations.
Own-source revenue *Own-source revenue per head of municipal population* *[Own-source revenue / Municipal population]*	$1,934.68	$2,047.23	$2,120.44	$2,168.38	Own-source revenue per head has increased by between 2023 and 2026, which aligns closely with cumulative CPI growth over this three-year period. This increase reflects the compounding impact of high inflation seen throughout 2023, 2024, and 2025. This is reflected in the increase over the same period for Expenses per head.

Indicator / measure [formula]	2023	2024	2025	2026	Comments
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	
Recurrent grants *Recurrent grants per head of municipal population* *[Recurrent grants / Municipal population]*	$444.62	$296.99	$534.05	$518.42	Council received 100% of the 2024/25 Victoria Grants Commission as well as 50% advance of the 2025/26 Financial year, with no funding received in the 2023/24 as these were advanced during the 2022/23 Financial year. Council received $4.8m, representing 80% of the Victorian Local Government Grants Commission funding for 2026–27, in advance.
Disadvantage *Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage* *[Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage by decile]*	5	5	5	5	
Workforce turnover *Percentage of staff turnover* [Number of permanent staff resignations and terminations / Average number of permanent staff for the financial year] x100	*12.40%	10.90%	12.06%	8.64%	Council has had less employees leave its employ than the previous 12 months. *During audit review in 2023/24 of underlying supporting information it was found prior years indicators should be reported as 2023 - 11.29% (previously 12.40%) as casuals had been incorrectly included in the staff numbers.

Section 5. Notes to the accounts

5.1. Basis of preparation

Council is required to prepare and include a performance statement within its annual report. The performance statement includes the results of the prescribed, service performance, financial performance and sustainable capacity indicators and measures together with a description of the municipal district, an explanation of material variations in the results and notes to the accounts. This statement has been prepared to meet the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*.

Where applicable the results in the performance statement have been prepared on accounting bases consistent with those reported in the Financial Statements. The other results are based on information drawn from council information systems or from third parties (e.g., Australian Bureau of Statistics or the Council's satisfaction survey provider).

The performance statement presents the actual results for the current year and the previous three years, along with the current year's target, if mandated by *the Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020*. Additionally, for the prescribed financial performance indicators and measures, the performance statement includes the target budget for the current year and the results forecast for the period 2026-27 to 2029-30 by the council's financial plan.

The *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2020* requires explanation of any material variations in the results contained in the performance statement. Council has adopted materiality thresholds relevant to each indicator and measure and explanations have not been provided for variations below the materiality thresholds unless the variance is considered to be material because of its nature.

5.2. Definitions

Key term	Definition
Aboriginal children	means a child who is an Aboriginal person
Aboriginal person	has the same meaning as in the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006
adjusted underlying revenue	means total income other than: • non-recurrent grants used to fund capital expenditure; and • non-monetary asset contributions; and • contributions to fund capital expenditure from sources other than those referred to above
adjusted underlying surplus (or deficit)	means adjusted underlying revenue less total expenditure
annual report	means an annual report prepared by a council under section 98 of the Act
asset renewal expenditure	means expenditure on an existing asset or on replacing an existing asset that returns the service capability of the asset to its original capability
asset upgrade expenditure	means expenditure that— (a) enhances an existing asset to provide a higher level of service; or (b) extends the life of the asset beyond its original life
critical non-compliance outcome notification	means a notification received by council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the *Food Act 1984* , or advice given to council by an authorized officer under that Act, of a deficiency that poses an immediate serious threat to public health
current assets	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
current liabilities	has the same meaning as in the Australian Accounting Standards
food premises	has the same meaning as in the *Food Act 1984*
intervention level	means the level set for the condition of a road beyond which a council will not allow the road to deteriorate and will need to intervene
local road	means a sealed or unsealed road for which the council is the responsible road authority under the *Road Management Act 2004*
major non-compliance outcome notification	means a notification received by a council under section 19N(3) or (4) of the *Food Act 1984*, or advice given to council by an authorized officer under that Act, of a deficiency that does not pose an immediate serious threat to public health but may do so if no remedial action is taken
MCH	means the Maternal and Child Health Service provided by a council to support the health and development of children within the municipality from birth until school age
non-current liabilities	means all liabilities other than current liabilities
own-source revenue	means adjusted underlying revenue other than revenue that is not under the control of council (including government grants)
population	means the resident population estimated by council

rate revenue	means revenue from general rates, municipal charges, service rates and service charges
relative socio-economic disadvantage	in relation to a municipal district, means the relative socio-economic disadvantage, expressed as a decile for the relevant financial year, of the area in which the municipal district is located according to the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage of SEIFA
restricted cash	means cash, cash equivalents and financial assets, within the meaning of the Australian Accounting Standards, not available for use other than for a purpose for which it is restricted, and includes cash to be used to fund capital works expenditure from the previous financial year
SEIFA	means the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas published from time to time by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on its Internet site
unrestricted cash	means all cash and cash equivalents other than restricted cash

7.4. Capital Works Report 2025-26

DIRECTORATE : City Infrastructure and Environment

Purpose:

This report is to present a recap of the Capital Works Program for the 2025-26 Financial Year.

Executive Summary

Each year, Warrnambool City Council undertakes a significant program of capital works to renew existing assets, upgrade infrastructure and deliver new facilities that support the needs of the community.

The program comprises projects approved through Council's annual budget process, multi-year projects continuing from previous financial years, externally funded projects and renewal works identified through Asset Management Plans, asset condition information, service priorities and available funding.

The attached *Capital Works Report 2025–2026* provides a community-focused overview of the breadth of infrastructure works delivered or progressed during the year. It explains the purpose and community benefit of these works, with a particular focus on roads, drainage, footpaths, bridges, buildings, beach access, playgrounds and public open space.

The report is intended to complement Council's formal financial and performance reporting by presenting capital works outcomes in an accessible and visually engaging format.

The *Capital Works Report 2025–2026* is provided for information.

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH
SECONDED: CR BILLY EDIS

That the Capital Works Program for 2025-26 Financial Year be received.

CARRIED - 6:0

Background / Previous Reporting

Council's Capital Works Program delivers the renewal, upgrade and construction of infrastructure across the municipality. This includes local roads, drainage, paths, bridges, community buildings, recreation facilities, public open space and coastal infrastructure.

Capital program reporting has traditionally focused primarily on project expenditure and financial performance. While this remains essential for governance and accountability, financial reporting alone does not always clearly communicate what has been delivered, why the work was required or how it benefits the community.

The attached report introduces a more community-focused approach to reporting capital works outcomes. It has been jointly developed by the Project Management Office and Communications Team and is intended to:

- demonstrate the breadth of infrastructure works undertaken across the municipality;
- explain the purpose and community benefit of different types of capital works;
- improve community understanding of Council's role in maintaining and renewing infrastructure;
- highlight selected projects completed or substantially progressed during the year; and
- provide greater visibility of significant projects continuing into future financial years.

This approach supports Council's response to the Community Satisfaction Survey by providing clearer and more accessible information about the services and infrastructure delivered for the community.

The format and community response will be reviewed to inform the development of future annual capital works reporting.

Issues

A significant proportion of Council's capital investment is directed toward renewing existing infrastructure. Renewal work is essential to maintain asset condition, safety and serviceability and to reduce the risk of more costly intervention in the future. However, this work is not always readily visible in particularly where it relates to underground drainage, structural maintenance, building services or preventative road treatments.

The report provides a representative overview rather than an exhaustive schedule or financial acquittal of every capital project. Formal financial outcomes, project carry-forwards and budget variances are addressed separately through Council's established financial reporting and year-end processes.

Some larger capital projects span more than one financial year due to their scale, planning and design requirements, external approvals, procurement processes or construction timeframes. The report includes a summary of significant projects underway to provide information about work that progressed during 2025–26 but will be completed in a future financial year.

Financial Impact

Council's adopted 2025–26 Budget included $28.94 million in new capital works allocations and $7.66 million in works carried forward from 2024–25, resulting in total planned whole-of-Council capital expenditure of $36.60 million.

The adopted budget includes capital expenditure outside the scope of the attached report, including fleet, plant, information technology, library resources and other corporate asset expenditure. It also reflects the assumptions and funding sources known when the budget was adopted, including projects that may have been contingent on external grant funding.

The capital program is reviewed during the financial year to reflect confirmed grant outcomes, revised project timing, updated cost estimates and other changes affecting project delivery.

Accordingly, the value of the infrastructure works program delivered by the City Infrastructure and Environment Directorate may differ from the whole-of-Council capital expenditure identified in the adopted budget.

The attached report is focused on communicating the infrastructure works delivered or progressed during 2025–26. It is not intended to provide a financial acquittal or reconciliation of the adopted capital budget.

Final expenditure, funding received, project variances and amounts carried forward into 2026–27 will be confirmed through Council's year-end financial reporting and Annual Report processes. There is no additional financial impact arising from Council receiving or publishing the attached report.

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

2 City Infrastructure
2.1 Our City will prioritise maintaining and renewing existing infrastructure.
2.5 Our City's road network will be maintained to a safe and high-quality standard.
2.8 Our City will continue to improve pedestrian, cycling and vehicle movement.
2.10 Our City's public spaces will be maintained to a high standard.

Timing

The report principally covers capital works delivered or progressed between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026.

The attached report also identifies selected multi-year projects that progressed during the reporting period and will continue into 2026–27 or later years.

Internal / External Consultation

Where a project is live and has had the appropriate planning and procurement undertaken and a commencement date and timeframe for the project is known, information in relation to the project will be communicated to relevant stakeholders and impacted residents for their information.

Capital Projects for new and upgrades to assets that are approved as part of the budget, first undergo a community consultation process through the draft budget being put out to the community for comment and feedback. These new or upgrade projects are generally developed from initial strategic planning work and are formulated and approved via a strategic plan that details the community and Council need for the new or upgraded infrastructure which will have also been through a community consultation process.

Legal Risk / Impact

There are no specific legal risks arising from Council receiving or publishing the attached report.

Legal, safety, environmental, procurement and delivery risks are considered and managed at an individual project level through Council's project planning, procurement, contract management and risk management processes.

Gender Impact Assessments are undertaken where required in accordance with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and Council's associated processes.

Officers' Declaration of Interest

Nil.

Collaborative Procurement

Opportunities for collaborative procurement are considered when planning and procuring relevant capital works.

During 2025–26, Council continued to partner with Corangamite Shire Council in procuring road resealing works. This collaborative arrangement provides greater purchasing scale and supports more competitive pricing for both councils.

Conclusion

The attached *Capital Works Report 2025–2026* provides an accessible overview of the infrastructure renewal, upgrade and new asset projects delivered or progressed during the year.

The report complements Council's formal financial and performance reporting by explaining the purpose, breadth and community benefit of the Capital Works Program.

The report is provided for information.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Capital works report 2025-2026 [**7.4.1** - 8 pages]

WARRNAMBOOL
CITY COUNCIL

Capital works report

2025-2026





Introduction

Step outside your front gate and most residents will immediately start interacting with infrastructure built and maintained by Council.

Footpaths, crossings, local roads, parks, trees, community buildings, sportsgrounds, kindergartens, public toilets are some examples of the built environment Council looks after for the community.

This built environment maintained by Council is significant, comprising more than 340 buildings, about three million square metres of sealed road, 57 bridges and culverts, 300k of pipe network, an airport, 290km of car parking and about 570km of concrete and sealed paths.

All up, our built assets are valued at more than $1 billion.

We have an annual program of capital works that maintains the assets we have and over time we provide additional facilities as the needs of our growing city change.

In 2025-2026 Council allocated $30.5 million towards renewal programs and projects

This report provides details on the capital works activities undertaken over the 2025-2026 financial year. It is presented in two parts. Part one details renewal activities, part two includes new work or special projects.

Most work is funded by Council (residents and ratepayers), others are funded with a combination of Council funding and funding sourced from the Victorian and/or Australian governments.

Cr Ben Blain
Mayor
Warrnambool City Council

Renewal

Road reconstruction

Council undertook several road upgrades supported by external funding with a focus on areas that required maintenance and provided an opportunity to increase safety.

Lava Street bus interchange (a)

The central bus interchange was moved from Koroit Street (between Liebig and Kepler streets) as part of the City Centre Renewal project, which ran from 2016 to 2017.

While initially a temporary measure, following community consultation, Council decided to make this move permanent, and to seek funding for safety improvements. A public survey completed by over 200 people found that Lava Street was the most preferred location for the interchange.

The project was delivered from late September to mid-December 2025 and included a raised pedestrian crossing, a lighting upgrade, improved drainage, a new road surface and repaired footpaths. Utilities for a new public toilet were also installed in preparation for new facilities in the future.

The project was partially funded via a TAC Safe Local Roads and Streets grant.

Timor/Gilles Intersection Upgrade (b)

A city centre laneway and intersection were upgraded to improve safety and accessibility, with De Grandi Lane receiving a significantly wider footpath and the Gilles and Timor streets roundabout renewed with safer pedestrian crossings.

The intersection had deteriorated and was due for renewal, and this project allowed Council to utilise external funding via the TAC Safe Local Roads and Streets Program while making the area safer for everyone.

Koroit/Ryot Intersection Upgrade (c)

The upgraded intersection has improved safety and access for all road users, particularly people walking across Koroit Street to access the hospital precinct, and drivers turning right from Ryot Street onto Koroit Street.

The project involved a new roundabout, pedestrian islands, renewed road pavement, accessible footpaths, kerb and drainage improvements, extra car parking on Ryot Street and the relocation of two bus stops further west on Koroit Street. The project was supported by a $400,000 grant from the Victorian Government's Safe Local Roads and Streets Program, with Council contributing up to $400,000.

Otway Road Pedestrian Crossing (d)

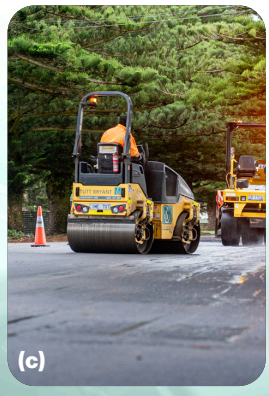
The project delivered a new raised pedestrian crossing on Otway Road between Ilex Avenue and the rail bridge. The footpath under the rail bridge also become a shared path. The need for a crossing at this location was highlighted as part of the East Warrnambool Local Area Traffic Management Plan (East Warrnambool LATM).

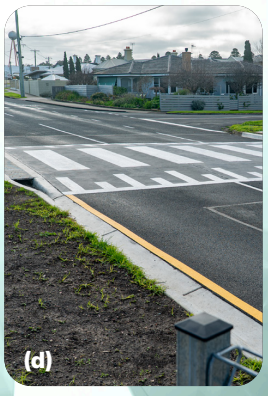
Botanic Road - Bromfield to Queens (e)

Raised safety platforms were installed on either side of the St Joseph's Primary School crossing on Botanic Road. The road surface between Queens Road and Bromfield Street, which was due for renewal, will also be completely rebuilt. The safety platforms were supported with funding from the Victorian Government's Safe Local Roads and Streets Program.











Renewal

Road resealing

Road resealing involves a bitumen spray being applied to the road surface before a layer of aggregate is rolled on top. This creates a new waterproof layer and prevents water from seeping into the road, eroding its foundations and eventually causing the surface to break up and potholes to form. Road resealing allows Council to get the maximum lifespan out of our roads, saving money in the long run.

Council partners with Corangamite Shire Council on a joint tender process achieve economies of scale and a lower price for the resealing work. Council's component of this contract costs approximately $327,000.

- Barkly Street – Nicholson Street to Foster Street
- Essington Court - Alexandra to Halladale
- Fotheringham Street - Caramut to Vickers
- Hopetoun Road - Chisholm to Crawley
- Lindsay Street - Baynes to Princes Hwy
- Logans Beach Road - Logans Beach Road
- Marfell Road: Hopkins Road – Point Richie Road
- Ziegler Parade: Brown Street – Ziegler Parade
- Merri Street - Kelp to Foster
- Ormsby Court - Minerva to End
- Parker Street - Fairfax to Hoddle
- Raglan Parade service road - Rooneys Road to Caramut Road
- Sundale Road - Couch to Heydon
- Warwick Place - Queens to End
- Watson Street - Dickson to Granter
- Wellington Street - Merrivale to McGennan



Fotheringham Street



Merri Street - Kelp to Foster

Renewal

Roads asphalting

This involves resurfacing roads with a "hot mix" of bitumen, sand, gravel and crushed rock.

This is a thicker, more durable finish that is suitable for high traffic areas including busy intersections. It is considerably more expensive than a spray and seal road surface.

- Braithwaite Street – Walsh Street to Owen Truss
- Chatham Court - Braithwaite to End
- Drummond Street - Russells Street
- Giffen Street - Aitkins to Clyde
- Hammond Place - Rooneys to End
- Henna Street - Merri to Timor
- Harris Street – Anderson St
- Pertobe Road – Street Stanley to Price
- Viaduct Road - Near Breakwater
- Viaduct Road - Near Stanley Street Roundabout
- Watson Street - Braithwaite to Dickson
- Worm Bay - Near Skatepark





Bridge maintenance

This year saw two larger projects to complete maintenance on the Hopkins Bridge and Ziegler Parade.

Ziegler Parade Bridge Maintenance (a)

This work forms part of Council's commitment to spend up to $400,000 to maintain the bridge up to the end of 2029. Significant work was done on the underside of the deck and all structural components.



Hopkins Bridge Bearings (b)

Work was completed in February 2025 to replace the bearings on the Hopkins Bridge as part of routine maintenance. The original bearings lasted about 25 years. The work can be done without any changes to pedestrian or vehicle access.

Smaller scale maintenance activities occurred across various other locations including:

- Wollaston Road - footbridge
- Botanic Gardens - footbridge
- Boston Drive - footbridge
- Wellington Street - footbridge
- Wollaston Road - road bridge
- Russells Creek - drain/culvert vegetation cleaning



Renewal

Drainage

A large portion of this year's drainage program aligned with larger scale road reconstruction projects. This allowed the drainage infrastructure to be renewed without reducing the longevity of the road structure above.

King Street Drainage

To reduce the risk of flooding in King Street, major drainage work was completed in the King Street and Bromfield Street area.

This project began in April 2025 and was completed in September. Drainage works can be difficult to plan because of unknowns underground, and this project experienced



delays due to a significant volume of rock (over 450 cubic metres) that needed to be removed, while an existing property sewerage connection meant the drainage system needed to be re-designed so both systems could fit.

While the project took longer than initially expected, the outcome has been excellent, and residents were kept informed throughout the process.

Smaller scale maintenance activities occurred across various other locations including:

- Merrivale Drive - (Wellington to Duirs)
- Ziegler Parade - relining
- Ziegler Parade - drainage

Footpaths

Industrial Estate Footpath (a)

Approximately 1.7km of new footpaths will link Merrivale Drive with McMeekin Road, Albert Street and Braithwaite Street in the Warrnambool Industrial Estate.

At approximately 1.7km in length, this is Council's largest new footpath project in at least 20 years, and will greatly improve safety for people walking in the area.

The new footpath is a $534,000 project and is being jointly funded by Council and the Australian Government via the Active Transport Fund.

Frank Street Footpath

A new 375m concrete footpath was built in Allansford in early 2026, extending from the rear entrance of Allansford and District Primary School along Frank Street to Tooram Road, then connect to Ziegler Parade and continuing down to Shrader Park.

This project was supported by the Victorian Government via a $50,000 Tiny Towns Grant with Council contributing up to $62,400 to the project.

Wollaston Road Footpath (b)

Approximately 380m of new footpath was built on Wollaston Road, extending the existing path from Ponting Drive up to Cecil Street.

Work began in June and was completed in early September. The project is supported with funding via the Australian Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.

Promenade Footpath Renewal (c)

During the first half of 2026, sections of the promenade have been renewed with new concrete. This work is being done in stages, with each section usually completed within a day, keeping detours on this popular path to a minimum, while each new section improved safety and accessibility.

Works also continued on the multi-year project to renewal Council's CBD footpaths. In 2025-2026 sections completed included:

- Henna Street – Koroit to Lava streets
- Timor Street – footpath at intersection with Gilles and De Grandi Lane







Renewal

Beach access

Beach Access at McGennans

A new beach access ramp at Lady Bay was officially opened in September 2025. The ramp is located at the popular McGennans carpark, close to accessible parking bays and the recently constructed accessible amenities block.

The project was completed in two stages. The first was to re-establish the dune profile after sections had become eroded over time, while the second stage involved the installation of the ramp and staircase.

The project was supported by the Victorian Government with $150,000 in funding via the Coastal Public Access and Risk Grants.



Another access within the McGennan Car Park area, Beach Access 122, saw some timber renewal.

Playgrounds and open space

New Fishing Gantry (a)

A new fish weighing gantry at the Warrnambool boat ramp was constructed in late 2025 and opened in January 2026. The existing gantry had reached the end of its useable life. The new gantry is operated by members of the Warrnambool Offshore & Light Game Fishing Club, and complements the new fish cleaning tables which are located nearby.
This project is a partnership between Council, the Victorian Fisheries Authority and the Warrnambool Offshore & Light Game Fishing Club.

Queens Road Pump Track (b)

Warrnambool's first pump track was opened at Queens Road in December 2025. It features a continuous concrete loop suitable for beginners through to more confident riders. This track was highlighted in our South of Merri Plan as a way to support active lifestyles, especially for young people.

Wooles Ave and Merrivale Recreation Reserve Playgrounds

Council constructed two playgrounds in 2026 as part of the annual Playground Renewal Program. This program sees old playgrounds that have reached the end of their useable life replaced with new equipment of a similar scale.
In Merrivale, the opportunity was taken to build the new playground outside of the reserve's boundary fence to make it easier for people to access, while a fully enclosed fence was included as part of the project due to the playground's proximity to Merrivale Drive.

Civic Green upgrade (c)

In March 2026, new seats, including a bench with wheelchair access, were installed on the Timor Street side of the Civic Green. The new seating will face towards the Green, making better use of the space.

This was the final part of a project that also delivered an upgraded power supply on the stage, additional power access points around the Green, a water supply and a storage area for Civic Green equipment. Things that you might not notice day-to-day, but make a big difference for groups running events.

The project received $100,000 in Victorian Government funding via the 2024 Council Support Package.

Other works included:

- Dennington Recreation Reserve – A portion of the fence was renewed and slightly realigned.
- Bushfield Recreation Reserve – Lighting maintenance was completed.
- In the Port of Warrnambool, water metering infrastructure has been improved due to changes in compliance requirements.







Renewal

Buildings

Council owns or manages over 350 buildings, all of which require periodic maintenance. In 2025-2026 activities included electrical switchboard improvements, renewing roofs, installing new carpets, and painting.

- Lake Pertobe barbecue shelter
- Archie Graham Community Centre
- Proudfoots
- Alveston House
- Table Tennis Club
- Botanic Gardens hothouse
- Aquarium domes
- Kindergartens
- Goodwin Hall
- Warrnambool Yacht Club
- Warrnambool Animal Shelter
- Merrivale Football Netball Club
- Girl Guides Hall
- East Warrnambool Kindergarten
- AquaZone
- Warrnambool Surf Life Saving Club
- Harris Street
- Bushfield Recreation Reserve
- Fire sprinkler renewal
- Walter Oval
- Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village
- Warrnambool Airport
- Civic Centre

Projects underway

The development of some larger scale multi-year projects is continuing.

Shipwreck Bay Key Worker Accommodation Project: planning and procurement stages are complete, with contracts awarded in August 2026. Civil works will begin by the end of August and be completed by Christmas 2026. The cabins will be installed between February and June 2027.

Viaduct Road Dune Stabilisation: the project is at a permit approval stage, ahead of a construction period in late 2026. This work is funded by the Victorian Government.

AquaZone Roof: A contract has been awarded for the replacement of a large section of the roof at AquaZone, with work expected to take place in late 2026 and be completed prior to Christmas.

Wollaston Road Duplication: Developers are continuing work in this area, with high voltage powerlines to also be relocated.

Davidson Oval: A power upgrade has been completed to support a future lighting upgrade.

Daltons Road Bridge: design has continued, including liaison with Glenelg-Hopkins Catchment Management Authority and Wannon Water.

Matron Swinton Playspace Renewal: designs are complete with construction to commence in the coming months.

Logans Beach Access: Council is continuing to advocate for funding to renew beach access from the whale viewing platform.

Dennington Playground: Planning continues regarding the most suitable location for a new playground in Dennington.

Saleyards Decommissioning: This project remains ongoing, with large structural items approaching decommissioning. The roof was successfully sold and is awaiting the buyer to dismantle. Works will continue into 2026/2027.

7.5. Active Transport Fund Grant Update

DIRECTORATE : City Futures

Purpose:

This report provides information on the status of infrastructure grant opportunities that are Upcoming for the Australian Government's Active Transport Fund.

Executive Summary

Following the successful application of the Australian Government's Active Transport Fund (ATF) Round 1 for the Industrial Precinct Footpath Construction Project, this report provides an update on the Australian Government's Active Transport Fund (ATF) Round 2 and outlines proposed projects for submission by Council.

The proposed projects have been selected to improve walking and cycling connectivity, address identified gaps within Warrnambool's active transport network and align with strategic planning documents, including the Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN).

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH
SECONDED: CR WILLY BENTER

That Council:

1. Endorses the submission of an application to the Australian Government Active Transport Fund for the;
    a. Lake Pertobe Path Network (Gilles Street Pedestrian Rail Crossing to the Pertobe Road Underpass); and
    b. Raglan Parade to Sherwood Park Station Link
2. Commits a Council co-contribution of up to $300,000 Ex GST, conditional upon the applications being successful;
3. Approves the co-contribution being funded from the General Reserve [or another identified funding source];
4. Notes that, if the application is successful, the project and associated grant income and Council contribution will be incorporated into the relevant Council budget through the applicable budget review/variation process; and
5. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer to submit the application, execute the funding agreement and undertake any administrative actions necessary to give effect to the resolution.

CARRIED - 6:0

Background / Previous Reporting

The Warrnambool Principal Pedestrian Network (PPN) identifies strategic walking corridors that improve accessibility, connectivity and safety across the municipality. The overarching objective of the PPN is to increase the proportion of local trips undertaken by walking or mobility aids while promoting healthier and more sustainable transport choices.

The Australian Government's Active Transport Fund provides financial assistance for projects that encourage walking and cycling through the delivery of safe, connected and accessible infrastructure. Council officers have reviewed the program guidelines and undertaken an assessment of potential projects against a range of criteria including:

- Strategic alignment with adopted Council plans;
- Community benefit and network connectivity outcomes;
- Ability to increase active transport participation;
- Project readiness and deliverability;
- Funding eligibility and likelihood of success; and
- Required Council contribution.

Following this assessment process, two projects were identified as providing the greatest opportunity to improve active transport outcomes while meeting funding program objectives.

Rank	Project	Total Cost	ATF Cost	WCC Contribution
1	Lake Pertobe Path Network (Gilles Street Pedestrian Rail Crossing to the Pertobe Road Underpass) (**Attachment 1**)	$ 300,000.00	$ 150,000.00	$ 150,000.00
2	Raglan Parade to Sherwood Park Station Link (**Attachment 2**)	$ 300,000.00	$ 150,000.00	$ 150,000.00

The proposed projects improve connectivity between key destinations, reduce barriers to walking and cycling, and support safer movement throughout Warrnambool. The projects are supported through several strategic plans and objectives, including structure planning.

Lake Pertobe Path Network (Gilles Street Pedestrian Rail Crossing to the Pertobe Road Underpass)

This project proposes the delivery of improved pedestrian and cycling connections between the Lake Pertobe precinct, Deakin University and surrounding destinations, including progression of the pedestrian rail crossing underpass concept. The project addresses a key missing link within Warrnambool's active transport network and improves accessibility to education, recreation and tourism destinations.

Raglan Parade to Sherwood Park Station Link

This project proposes improvements connecting the Raglan Parade corridor to Sherwood Park Station, facilitating safer cycling and walking access to public transport infrastructure. The project supports multi-modal transport outcomes and improves active transport options for residents travelling to employment, educational and recreational destinations.

Issues

Warrnambool continues to experience growth in active transport demand, however a number of gaps remain within the walking and cycling network. These gaps reduce accessibility and discourage active transport participation.

The proposed projects seek to address several identified challenges, including:

- Missing pedestrian and cycling links between key destinations;
- Limited separation between active transport users and vehicle traffic;
- Accessibility barriers for mobility-impaired users;
- Reduced connectivity to educational, recreational and transport hubs;
- Safety concerns at existing crossing points; and
- Increasing demand for alternative transport options that reduce reliance on private vehicles.

The Active Transport Fund presents an opportunity to accelerate delivery of priority projects that would otherwise compete with other infrastructure priorities for Council funding.

Financial Impact

Site 1 Lake Pertobe Path Network (Gilles Street Pedestrian Rail Crossing to the Pertobe Road Underpass)
Grant: $150,000
Council Contribution from Open Space Reserves: $150,000
Total: $300,000

Raglan Parade to Sherwood Park Station Link
Grant: $150,000
Council Contribution from Footpath Reserves, with savings captured as part of the 2025/26 budget report: $150,000
Total: $300,000

This will bring the total funding application for round 2 Active Transport Fund to $300,000.00, matched by a Council contribution of $300,000.00.

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

1 City Futures
1.2 Our City puts public health and safety as a priority

2 City Infrastructure
2.1 Our City will prioritise maintaining and renewing existing infrastructure.
2.3 Our City will plan for and improve the municipal drainage network to cope with the changing environment.
2.4 Our City neighbourhoods will have a well-connected network of footpaths.
2.5 Our City's road network will be maintained to a safe and high-quality standard.
2.7 Our City values and implements sound Strategy Asset Management with consideration to assets and the retirement and consolidation of assets.
2.8 Our City will continue to improve pedestrian, cycling and vehicle movement.

Timing

Each of these projects is expected to be completed within the 26/27 and 27/28 financial year(s) by the funding provider, depending on when the application outcome is formally received.

Internal / External Consultation

The projects have been informed through strategic planning undertaken as part of the Principal Pedestrian Network and broader active transport planning activities. Engagement with affected stakeholders and the wider community would be undertaken as part of project development and delivery.

Key stakeholders are expected to include:

- Department of Transport and Planning, and VicTrack
- Nearby residents and businesses
- Cycling Reference Group
- Deakin University
- Other standard stakeholders (Warrnambool Bus Lines, DTP, Vic Pol, CFA, Ambulance Vic)

Legal Risk / Impact

If successful, both projects will be delivered through Council's Project Management Office using established project governance, risk management and procurement processes. Appropriate approvals and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken throughout project development and delivery.

Officers' Declaration of Interest

Nil.

Collaborative Procurement

Collaborative procurement opportunities will be considered where beneficial. Where appropriate, project-specific procurement processes will be undertaken.

Conclusion

The Active Transport Fund provides an opportunity for Council to accelerate delivery of priority walking and cycling infrastructure projects that improve safety, accessibility and connectivity across Warrnambool. The proposed Lake Pertobe Path Network (Gilles St Pedestrian Rail Crossing to the Pertobe Rd Underpass) and Raglan Parade to Sherwood Park Station Link projects align with Council's strategic objectives, support increased active transport participation and deliver long-term community benefits.

Subject to Council endorsement, applications will be submitted to the Active Transport Fund, with successful outcomes enabling the delivery of up to $600,000 of active transport infrastructure through a combination of Australian Government funding and Council contribution.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Attachment 1 - Lake Pertobe (Gilles St - Underpass) - Concept [**7.5.1** - 1 page]
2. Attachment 2 - Raglan Parade (Mahoneys - Sherwood Park Station) - Concept [**7.5.2** - 1 page]



N	NOT TO SCALE						WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL Lake Pertobe Missing Link (Gilles St - Underpass) Lake Pertobe, Warrnambool	SK001 CONCEPT SKETCH V2
								REV A
		A	12/08/26	SL	-	FOR REVIEW		
		REV	DATE	BY	APP	REVISION DESCRIPTION	PROJECT REF:	



N

NOT TO SCALE

REV	DATE	BY	APP	REVISION DESCRIPTION
A	12/08/26	SL	-	FOR REVIEW

WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL
Raglan Parade Missing Link
(Mahoneys - Sherwood Park Station)
Raglan Parade, Warrnambool

PROJECT REF:

SK001

CONCEPT SKETCH

REV A

7.6. Middle Island Project Annual Report

DIRECTORATE : City Futures

Purpose:

The Middle Island Project Annual Report 2025/2026 Season is provided for information.

Executive Summary

The Annual Report 2025/2026 outlines the achievements and challenges of the Middle Island Project, highlights ongoing community and partner support, and provides an update on the Maremma guardian dog team.

The Middle Island Project has contributed to the conservation of the Middle Island little penguin (*Eudyptula minor*) colony for twenty-one years. Known as "The Warrnambool Method" for wildlife conservation, the project's innovative use of Maremma guardian dogs to protect a colony of wild little penguins was world-first.

The Middle Island Project is a partnership between Warrnambool City Council, Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Network, Deakin University, Warrnambool Field Naturalists Club, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and Parks Victoria. Major sponsors include Petstock Warrnambool, The Vet Group, and Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum.

The Middle Island Project is continually evolving and the ability to effectively complete operational requirements has become increasingly difficult over the previous four years due to a combination of factors.

Council officers continue to investigate a range of operational changes that may enable ongoing conservation and protection of the little penguins on Middle Island, ensure the wellbeing of the Maremma Dogs involved in the guardian dog program and best use of Council and Community resources.

MOVED: CR RICHARD ZIEGELER
SECONDED: CR WILLY BENTER

That Council accepts the 2025/2026 Middle Island Project Annual Report (Attachment 1) for publication on "Warrnambool Penguins" webpage and distribution to stakeholders.

CARRIED - 6:0

Background / Previous Reporting

The Annual Report 2025/2026 outlines the achievements and challenges of the Project, highlights ongoing community and partner support, and provides an update on the Maremma guardian dog team.

Highlights include;

- No evidence of foxes on the island during the season
- Ongoing interest in the 'Penguin Protectors Warrnambool' education experience as well as Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum (FSH) education program engaging over 1,906 individuals
- Ongoing sponsorship and support from the community (local to overseas)
- Strong social media with 19,900 followers on Facebook and 12,000 on Instagram

Challenges include;

- Ongoing health concerns for the dogs
- Reduced access to Middle Island
- Infrastructure deterioration on Middle Island

The Middle Island Project (the Project) has contributed to the conservation of the Middle Island little penguin (Eudyptula minor) colony for twenty-one years. Known as "The Warrnambool Method" for wildlife conservation, the project's innovative use of Maremma guardian dogs (dogs) to protect a colony of wild little penguins was world-first. The Project became the inspiration for the movie "Oddball" in 2015, which has since permanently put Warrnambool on the map on a global scale.

The Project is a partnership between Warrnambool City Council, Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Network (WCLN), Deakin University, Warrnambool Field Naturalists Club, the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and Parks Victoria. These stakeholders form the Middle Island Project Committee (Committee) and advise Council on the management of the project. Major sponsors include Petstock Warrnambool, The Vet Group, and Flagstaff Hill.

The Project has adopted an adaptive management approach to conserve little penguins and other seabird species on Middle Island. Using dogs in conjunction with other fox control methods implemented by Council such as baiting and shooting. In doing so, the Project continues to work towards the vision to "ensure the long-term survival of the little penguin colony on Middle Island through the use of conservation techniques that reduce the threats posed to these birds".

In recent years the ability to effectively complete operational requirements has become more difficult for a combination of factors. Primarily, unpredictable and changed environmental conditions restricting safe access to the island and infrastructure damage preventing unsupervised dog deployment.

In 2024 a sub-committee of the Committee recommended to continue the education program and restructure the guardian program, with no new dogs being purchased until crossings to the island can be made on a regular basis and penguin monitoring can once again provide clear estimates of the population size.

Stingray Bay is a dynamic body of coastline, with conditions changing regularly and influenced by the flow of the Merri River, tide strength and direction, as well as prevailing winds. In front of the island is a reef and in front of the reef is a deep channel that provides an added hazard to Middle Island crossings. Staff and volunteers follow protocols as outlined in the Project Operational Manual and Risk Management Plan to reduce the risks of crossing to Middle Island.

The boardwalk on Middle Island was originally built in 2002 to protect burrows from being collapsed by people walking on the surface. Since the closing of Middle Island to the public, the boardwalk has been modified and used to securely house the dogs while they protect the little penguins from fox attacks.

Other fox control methods undertaken by Council are guided by the Fox Action Plan – Coastal Reserve. This includes two baiting programs per year, fumigation of known fox dens and off target shooting from Council's rabbit control activities. Fox control success is measured by surveying the foreshore for fox activity. This surveying has shown a drop in fox activity during the 2025 fox baiting programs and a shift in fox activity hot spots since surveying began in 2018.

Issues

1. Environmental conditions have considerably changed the crossing to Middle Island over the past four seasons, reducing the predictability and safety of access to Middle Island. The channel largely caused by the Merri River outflow has become deeper for extended periods of time over the little penguin breeding season, reducing the ability to have dogs on Middle Island and WCLN to complete effective penguin monitoring. Middle Island access is continually monitored year-round; however prolonged unsafe crossing conditions and adverse weather events have significantly limited safe access. During the 2022/2023 (October to March) breeding season, breeding monitoring and penguin arrival counts were able to be conducted, however in limited capacity. During the 2023/2024 season, access was only possible during a 6-week period between December to January when tide, swell, and weather conditions facilitated safe access. Spring storms before the 2024/2025 season damaged Stingray Bay and removed a lot of sand from the bay. Beach accesses were closed and crossing to Middle Island was unsafe at this time. There was no breeding monitoring and penguin arrival counts undertaken during the 2025/2026 season.

2. Middle Island infrastructure has needed ongoing repair as a result of harsh environmental conditions which have contributed to deterioration in the boardwalk and fencing over time. Damage to the boardwalk has made it unsafe to have dogs unattended on Middle Island since the 2023/2024 season and unsafe crossing conditions delayed repairs.

3. There are currently five dogs in Councils care, of which four are working on the Project. As the dogs age, their health concerns increase and their capacity to undertake their roles on any given day becomes less predictable. The age and health status of the dogs is an important consideration for future planning and it is important that back-up options and the potential for dogs having a dual role are explored in the event a dog is unable to undertake their role.

4. The Project education program consists of the following talks and provides a fantastic opportunity to increase awareness in the project and raise revenue to contribute to the costs of the Project.

    a. The Penguin Protectors Warrnambool – Educational Experience, is available to group bookings throughout the year and opens to the general public (up to 30 people) during the summer and Easter school holidays.
    b. FSH offers group bookings for schools and tourism operators.
    c. Incursions are offered to local schools.

d. The Middle Island Project Officer has engaged with audiences in the USA with one off online presentations and Q&A's.
e. Middle Island Project word searches, colour in sheets and other materials have been produced and available on request.

5. As there is interest in the project from interstate and overseas an online virtual tour of Middle Island and aspects of the project is under development. This virtual online tour is intended to create an additional revenue source for the Middle Island project.

6. WCLN has possession of remote sensing cameras and acoustic recording equipment. Once set up, this equipment can be used to passively monitor the little penguin colony. The data collected will provide evidence of little penguins using Middle Island and when combined with arrival counts and breeding monitoring, provide a well-rounded assessment of the Middle Island colony.

Financial Impact

The Middle Island Project is recurrently funded by Council. Councils Guardian dogs are cared for by Councils team of Dog Handlers/Education Officers. Volunteers contribute substantially to the Middle Island conservation effort. These include Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Network (WCLN), Deakin University and the Warrnambool Field Naturalists Club.
The Middle Island Project receives income from the Education and Tour Program, public donations and sponsorship.

Legislation / Policy / Council Plan Context

2 City Infrastructure
2.1 Our City will prioritise maintaining and renewing existing infrastructure.

3 City Sustainability
3.4 Our City will monitor and manage pest animals and plants on land owned and/or managed by Council.
3.6 Our City will collaborate with other agencies to achieve positive environmental outcomes.
3.10 Our City will advocate for support to manage our coastal areas effectively.

Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994
20 General duties of land owners
(1) In relation to his or her land a land owner must take all reasonable steps to -
(1)
(1) (f) prevent the spread of, and as far as possible eradicate, established pest animals.

Timing

The Middle Island Project Annual Report is for the period July 2025 to June 2026 inclusive.

Internal / External Consultation

The Middle Island Project Committee advises Council on the operational aspects of the Project.
The Warrnambool Community have a vested interest in the Project, finding it a source of pride for their hometown.

The community is informed of project outcomes through media releases, the projects own website "Warrnambool Penguins", its Facebook and Instagram pages and the annual report.
Council will work with the Middle Island Project Committee and other stakeholders to consider the changing conditions the Project operates under and how best to focus future conservation efforts on and around Middle Island.

Legal Risk / Impact

All penguin monitoring and data collection is conducted under ethics approvals, there are no legal or environmental risk issues.

Use of remote sensing cameras and acoustic recording equipment by WCLN are exempt under general conditions of the Marine and Coastal Act.

The Middle Island Project is guided by the Project Operational Manual and Risk Management Plan.

Officers' Declaration of Interest

Nil.

Collaborative Procurement

The Project is a collaborative project, encompassing local and state governing bodies including Council, DEECA and Parks Victoria, as well as local community conservations groups such as WCLN and Warrnambool Field Naturalists. The project also collaborates with local businesses including Petstock Warrnambool and The Vet Group and educational bodies including Deakin University.

Council manages the dog component of the project, with WCLN managing little penguin monitoring. Ongoing research into the little penguin colony is conducted by Deakin University.

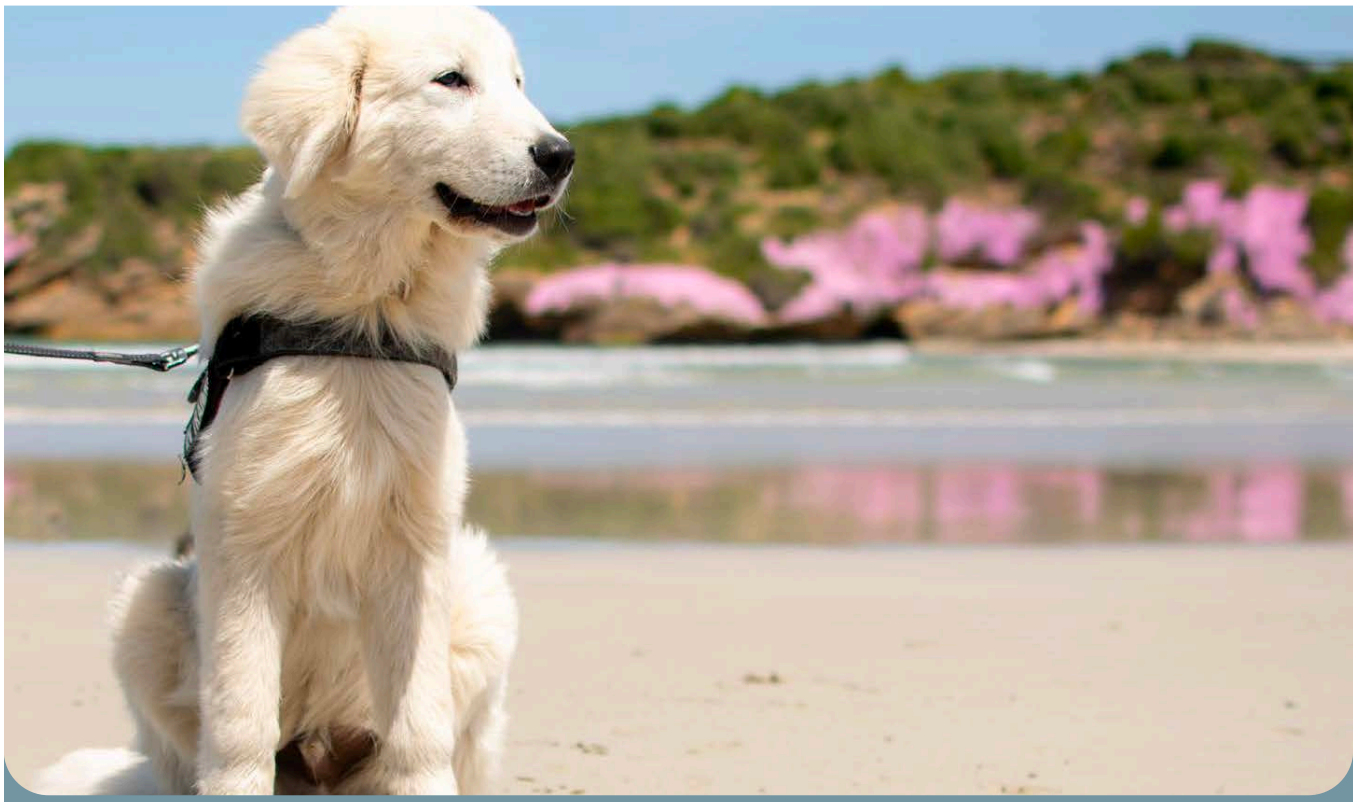
Conclusion

The willingness to adapt and multidisciplinary nature of the Middle Island Project has contributed largely to its success over the previous twenty-one years. This includes the project partnerships and sponsors. Increased challenges in island management, including access to Middle Island and damage to infrastructure increase the need for a more holistic approach in project management, in addition to a more comprehensive education and promotion program.

ATTACHMENTS

1. 4300 Middle island season report v 2 [**7.6.1** - 10 pages]


The Middle Island Project
SEASON REPORT 25/26
WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL
www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au



SEASON REPORT 25/26

The Middle Island Project (the Project) has contributed to the conservation of the Middle Island Little penguin (Eudyptula minor) colony for twenty-one years.

Known as "The Warrnambool Method" for wildlife conservation, the project's innovative use of Maremma guardian dogs to protect a colony of wild Little penguins is a world-first.

The project is a partnership between Warrnambool City Council (WCC), Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Network (WCLN), Deakin University, Warrnambool Field Naturalists Club (WFNC), the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) and Parks Victoria (PV). The project is assisted by major sponsors Petstock Warrnambool, The Vet Group, and Flagstaff Hill Maritime Village (FSH).

This annual report for season 2025-2026 outlines the achievements and challenges of the project, highlights ongoing community and partner support and provides an update on the Maremma guardian dog team.

The project highlights for 2025-26 include:

- No evidence of foxes on the island during this season.
- Ongoing interest in the "Penguin Protectors Warrnambool" education experience as well as the FSH education program, engaging over 1,906 individuals.
- Continued media interest in the project.
- The project has experienced continued support from major sponsors including Petstock Warrnambool and The Vet Group.
- Support from local businesses and individuals across multiple aspects of the project, as well as correspondence from interstate and overseas.

Project challenges for 2025-26 include:

- Ongoing health concerns for Maremma Guardian dogs.
- Damage to infrastructure on Middle Island has caused the island to remain unsafe for unsupervised dog activity.
- Island accessibility was dependent on tide, swell and weather conditions, resulting in a significantly reduced monitoring program.

Key Little penguin statistics:

- Indirect evidence of the colony on the island, including evidence of breeding activities, was used in the absence of direct observations due to highly impaired monitoring activities.
- No penguin counts were able to be conducted this season, largely to unsafe crossing conditions reducing accessibility for direct observation. As a result, there remains no reliable estimate for the population size for this season.
- Short-tailed Shearwaters continue to breed on the Island during their global migration journey.
- No breeding surveys were conducted, caused by issues in accessing Middle Island.
- Research undertaken by Deakin University staff/students will be presented in posters at the International Penguin Conference at Phillip Island in August/ September 2026.

Key education statistics:

- The “Penguin Protectors Warrnambool” education experience was available to the public over the September and December/January school holidays and available to private bookings all year round.
- The FSH education program was available all year round.
- The “Penguin Protectors Warrnambool” education experience engaged with 785 people, and FSH bookings reached 1,121 individuals.
- Two third-year Deakin University students completed their placement with the Middle Island Project, completing 160 hours and assisting with the expansion and development of our education program.

Partner Support:

- WCLN has continued to support the project through its Seabird Monitoring Program and participation on the project committee.
- Deakin University has continued to support the project through obtaining ethics approvals and research permit requirements and participation on the project committee.
- Deakin University has continued collaboration between the project and the Bachelor of Marine Science degree, providing marine students with an opportunity to learn about a local conservation initiative, and the benefits and challenges faced.
- WFNC has continued to support the project through participation on the project committee.



The Middle Island Project SEASON REPORT 23/24

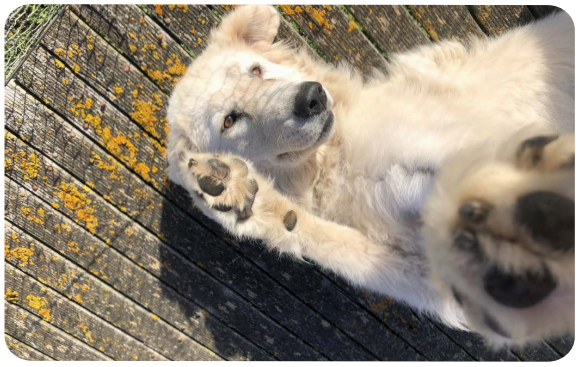
MAREMMA GUARDIAN DOGS

The team of five Maremma guardian dogs continued their roles in the conservation of the Middle Island Little penguin colony. Although access to Middle Island was limited over the season the guardian dogs spent their time on the island and at Stingray Bay scenting to prevent fox predation.

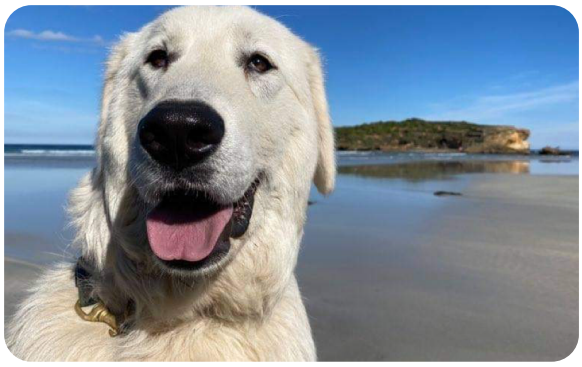


Mezzo

The guardian team is led by Mezzo who will be nine in August 2026. Mezzo also spent time participating in the education program as he looks to transition into an early retirement.



Isola, as the teams support guardian, is working towards becoming the lead guardian. Isola will be eight in November 2026.



Oberon is the youngest of the guardian team and still working on his skills. Oberon has the potential to work in the education program in a dual role. Oberon was seven in June 2026.



Avis is the lead education dog and looking towards retirement in the next year. Avis is ten in July 2026.



Amor has now retired from all active duties and spends his days relaxing at the Farm. Amor was ten in December 2025.

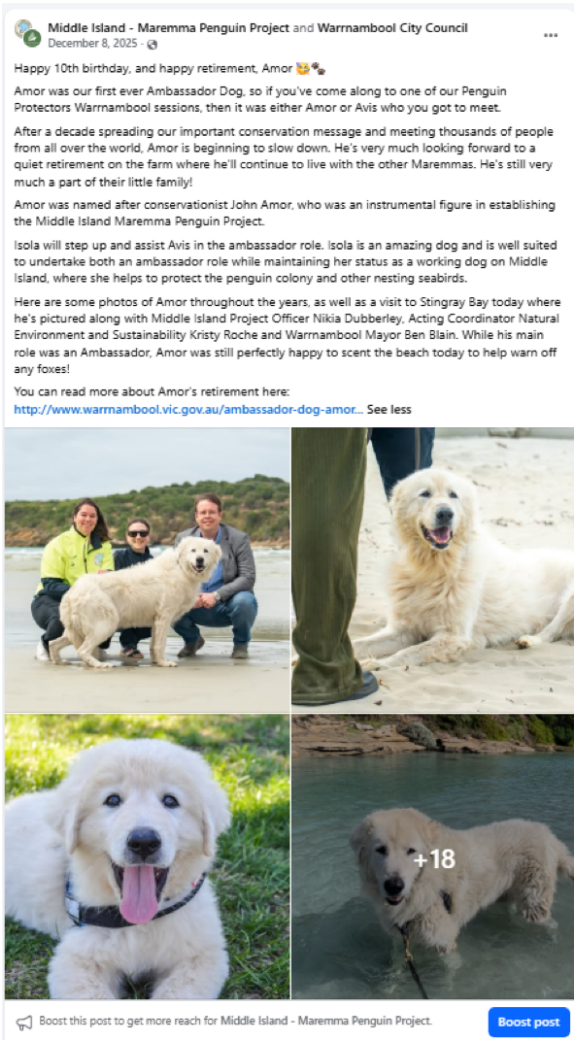


WCC's dog handler team spend time each day caring for the Maremma guardian dogs, walking them and visiting Stingray Bay. During the breeding season of the Little penguin the dog handlers visit Middle Island with the guardian dogs. When conditions allow the guardian dogs will stay on the island overnight. The presence of the Maremma guardian dogs on Middle Island has stopped any predation on the Little penguins while they are on duty.

As the Maremma guardian dogs age they are experiencing a range of health issues, which dogs that can weigh 50kg or more often get. Support from The Vet Group means they get the best of care and quick treatment. Throughout the year the housing of the Maremma guardian dogs was increased with larger runs. This has allowed for improved rotation of the Maremma guardian dogs each day.

In November 2025, Rob Bast carved a life size Maremma that now sits at the Visitor Information Centre at FSH.

In December 2025 Amor's retirement was announced and his ten years of service celebrated across many platforms including The Warrnambool Standard. WCC's media release can be found at https://www.warrnambool.vic.gov.au/ambassador-dog-amor-retires-after-decade-service



Little Penguin Monitoring

Ongoing difficulties in safely accessing Middle Island significantly reduced the ability of WCLN volunteers to monitor the Little Penguin population during the 2025-26 breeding season.

Due to this no arrival counts or breeding monitoring occurred over the season. WCC have been working with WCLN to obtain consent to passively monitor the Little penguins of Middle Island with the use of remote-sensing cameras and acoustic recorders. This consent has been obtained and WCLN volunteers will utilise this technology in the coming season as an addition to traditional monitoring techniques.

Although no formal monitoring occurred there is anecdotal evidence of Little penguins in the area and breeding. Sightings of Little penguins have occurred along the coast and Mosswood Wildlife have taken Little penguins, including fledglings, into their care.

WCLN volunteers as part of their Seabird Monitoring Program continue to be active monitoring and checking weather, tide and crossing conditions to Middle Island. Undertaking these tasks allows them to be ready to access Middle Island when safe conditions occur.

Deakin University

Research into the Middle Island Little penguin colony continues with a PhD student based at the Warrnambool campus investigating environmental determinants of Little penguins with a focus on the Middle Island colony.

Recent testing of PFAS in Little penguin samples from Middle Island has occurred. Both the results of this testing and findings from the PhD research will be presented in posters at the International Penguin Conference at Phillip Island in August/September 2026.







"PENGUIN PROTECTORS WARRNAMBOOL" EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

WCC's dog handling team had a busy year conducting talks at the Foreshore Pavilion/ Stingray Bay and at FSH.

The education experience explores the biology of the Little penguin, how volunteers undertake their conservation works monitoring the Little penguins and the role of the Maremma guardian dogs. Each talk is finished with a visit from one of the education team and a photograph opportunity.

The education experience held over the September (37 participants) and December/January (484 participants) school holidays had a total of 521 participants. Ten of the seventeen talks held over the December/January school holidays were fully booked with another three at 97% capacity.
Seven schools ranging from primary to tertiary booked private experiences with a total of 264 participants. Schools attending came from the Warrnambool area and as far as Shepparton.

The FSH education experience saw an increase of tour groups and schools sign up for the experience with 1,121 (32 different groups) participants. This experience is offered as one of many options for groups to complete while visiting FSH.
During the April school holidays, the "Penguin Protectors Warrnambool" education experience was offered as part of the FSH holiday program. This provided an opportunity to run the education experience when dog handler staff availability didn't allow for the Foreshore Pavilion/Stingray Bay experiences to go ahead. This was well attended.

WCC is working on an online experience that will provide a behind scenes look at the project, interviews with current and past project identities and access to Middle Island through photographs and videos.

The Middle Island Project Officer connected with a school in the United States of America participating in online question time with students and an American author highlighting the work of the Maremma guardian dogs.

Project Sponsorship

PETstock Warrnambool, The Vet Group and FSH continued as major sponsors of the project during the 2025-26 season, contributing invaluable resources and support. The project and its success can be credited to the continued commitment and support of these sponsors, whose partnership with the project ensures the health and wellbeing of the Maremma guardian dogs and ability to hold education experiences in inclement weather.

Purina Pro Plan and 4CYTE continue to supply their products for the benefit of the Maremma guardian dogs ensuring they have the food and supplements they need.



Community Support

Support from the wider community continues with online and cash donations, through deposit boxes found at Rafferty Tavern's Middle Island Bar, Warrnambool Visitor Information Centre, Surfside Holiday Park and The Vet Group. Each year Lucky Little Penguins donates proceeds of their project themed greeting cards with a series of Christmas themed cards that are always popular.

This year the Australian War Animal Memorial Organisation chose to support the project with a cash donation and supplied the project with a range of dog jackets, including life vests and a pet first aid kit.

The project was highlighted in a book called Dogs with Jobs written by Andrea Rowe and Julia Murray. The Maremma guardian dogs were one of several conservation dogs from around the world.

We thank all those that have contributed to the project and supported its ongoing success.



Work Placement

The partnership between WCC and Deakin University is strengthened with third year students undertaking work placement with the Natural Environment & Sustainability team at WCC. Two students were able to work closely with the Middle Island Project Officer, dog handlers and other team members throughout the year.

Students focused primarily on improving the education aspects of the project and assisted with the education experience. Having work placements students work on the project provides WCC with the opportunity to progress parts of the project quicker than would occur without the extra assistance.

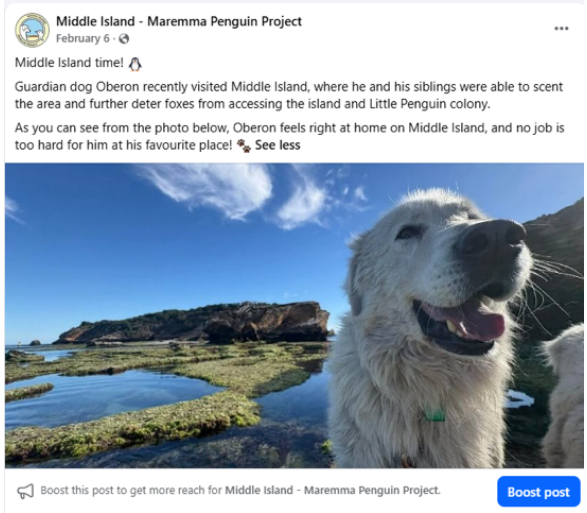


Social Media

The project continues to be a hit on social media with 19.9k followers on Facebook and 12k on Instagram. A Facebook post in May 2026 closing out the breeding season reached a high of 24.4k people with 996 likes.







Middle Island Project Committee

The Middle Island Project Committee met quarterly throughout the 2024-2025 season, enabling regular participation from stakeholders to provide guidance, advice and insights to the project.

Interest in the project from the community and key agencies promotes the continued development of the project and assures its longevity. The Committee is comprised of a representative from the following organisations, agencies and groups, in addition to a Project Officer and a Penguin Monitoring Officer.

1. **Deakin University**
2. **Warrnambool Field Naturalists Club**
3. **Warrnambool Coastcare Landcare Network**
4. **Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action**
5. **Parks Victoria**
6. **Community Representative**
7. **Warrnambool City Council – Officer**
8. **Warrnambool City Council – Executive**

Council would like to thank all committee members for their contribution and guidance to the project this season. A special thank you goes to Anne Wallis who has been a part of the committee since its inception and stood down as the WFNC representative during the year.

Integrated Fox Management

The 2025/26 fox management program delivered an integrated pest management approach prioritising protection of the Middle Island Little penguin colony.

The annual fox control program commenced Spring 2025, running over four weeks (1 to 30 September 2025). Throughout this period, fumigation, den destruction and baiting techniques were used for holistic management across the Warrnambool foreshore (Thunder Point to Moyjil). Reduced fox activity was noted during this period, with five baits taken across 10 locations.

During Autumn 2026, Council embarked on a pest animal control program integrating targeted shooting via a certified contractor. As part of the Rabbit Control Program, foxes were also targeted for management within the foreshore. As of 30 June, Nine (9) foxes were shot and removed, as part of integrated fox management.

Council will continue integrated management of pest animals as part of its ongoing protection of the Middle Island little penguin colony.





SUPPORT THE MIDDLE ISLAND PROJECT

The Middle Island Project is supported by Warrnambool City Council, some great sponsors and a crew of wonderful volunteers.

You can help the Middle Island Project by following and sharing our social media, hosting a donation box or becoming a sponsor.

If you'd like to help please get in touch: green@warrnambool.vic.gov.au

And if you'd like to help the Project financially you can make a donation through our website at this link: **www.warrnamboolpenguins.com.au/get-involved**

Facebook: Middle Island – Maremma Penguin Project
Instagram: @wboolpenguins
Twitter: @wboolpenguins

7.7. Informal Meetings Of Council Reports

DIRECTORATE : Executive Services

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with copies of Informal Meetings of Council (previously known as "Assembly of Councillor Records") as previously required under section 80A(2) of the Local Government Act 1989.

Background Information

Section 80A(2) of the Local Government Act 1989 required the record of an Assembly of Councillors to be reported at an ordinary Council meeting.

Assembly of Councillor Records are no longer a requirement in the Local Government Act 2020 as of 24 October 2020. However, under Council's Governance Rules, a summary of the matters discussed at the meeting are required to be tabled at the next convenient Council meeting and recorded in the minutes of that Council meeting.

Report

The record of the following Informal Meetings of Council are enclosed:-

1. Monday 10 August 2026 – refer **Attachment 1**;
2. Monday 17 August 2026 – refer **Attachment 2**;
3. Monday 24 August 2026 – refer **Attachment 3**;
4. Monday 31 August 2026 – refer **Attachment 4.**

ATTACHMENTS

1. Assembly of Councillors Record 10 August 2026 [**7.7.1** - 2 pages]
2. Assembly of Councillors Record 17 August 2026 [**7.7.2** - 2 pages]
3. Assembly of Councillors Record 24 August 2026 [**7.7.3** - 1 page]
4. Assembly of Councillors Record 31 August 2026 [**7.7.4** - 2 pages]

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH

SECONDED: CR BILLY EDIS

That the record of the Informal Meetings of Council held on 10, 17, 24 and 31 August 2026, be received.

CARRIED – 6:0

Informal Meeting of Council Record

Name of committee or group (if applicable):	Informal Meeting of Council (Councillor Briefing)
Date of meeting:	10 August 2026
Time meeting commenced:	3.00pm
Councillors in attendance:	Cr. B. Blain, Mayor Cr. D. Arnott Cr. W. Benter - Virtual Cr. V. Jellie AM - Virtual Cr. M. Walsh Cr. R. Ziegeler – Virtual
Council officers in attendance:	Andrew Mason, Chief Executive Officer Luke Coughlan, Director City Futures - until 5.44pm Peter Utri, Director Corporate Strategies Brooke Love, Director City Wellbeing James Plozza, Manager Governance Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant Justin Hartzmeyer, Coordinator Natural Environment & Sustainability - 4.11pm – 4.37pm Rod Sanderson, Acting Manager Environment, Sustainability & Compliance - 4.11pm – 4.37pm Lauren Edney, Manager Recreation & Culture – 4.38 pm – 4.59pm Janetta Mascilongo, Service Manager Library & Learning Hub - 4.38pm – 4.59pm Nick Higgins, Manager Engagement & Communications - 5.00pm – 5.19pm Yvonne Anson, Community Engagement Coordinator - 5.00pm – 5.19pm Abel Farrell, Manager Infrastructure – 5.07pm – 6.16pm
Other persons present:	N/A
Apologies	Cr. B. Edis
Matters considered:	• Priority Projects. • Middle Island Annual Report. • Warrnambool Library and Learning Centre Service Update. • Budget Community Engagement 2027-2028. • Liebig Street Shelters. • Road Safety Grant Update. • Capital Works Report 2025-26.
Council and officer items raised	• DeGrandis and Flaherty Lanes works. • Footpath works in Merrivale. • Regional Cities Victoria and South West Victoria Alliance Parliament meetings. • South West Victoria Alliance Mayoral lunch. • South West Victoria Alliance and Councillors workshop. • Banksia planting in Warrnambool Japanese Gardens. • Minister for Regional Victoria meeting. • Reid Oval playing surface. • Weekly red bin pick up proposal. • AI projects Amazon film. • Land corner Lava and Henna Streets rezoning. • Melbourne International Film Festival Warrnambool screenings.

	• Sherwood Park Early Learning Centre. • Warrnambool Futures. • Warrnambool Bowls Club land sale. • Restoration of World War I cannon. • Stephens Street car parking. • McDonald Street footpath to Thunder Point. • Pertobe Road and Harris Street water troughs. • Mountain Bike track. • Buchanan's Lane. • No parking signs on naturestrips. • Warrnambool localities naming.
Councillor Conflicts of Interest Disclosures Nil.	
Meeting close time:	6.16pm
Record completed by:	Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant

Informal Meeting of Council Record

Name of committee or group (if applicable):	Informal Meeting of Council (Councillor Briefing)
Date of meeting:	17 August 2026
Time meeting commenced:	3.10pm
Councillors in attendance:	Cr. B. Blain, Mayor Cr. D. Arnott Cr. W. Benter Cr B. Edis Cr. V. Jellie AM Cr. M. Walsh Cr. R. Ziegeler – Virtual
Council officers in attendance:	Andrew Mason, Chief Executive Officer Luke Coughlan, Director City Futures Peter Utri, Director Corporate Strategies Paul Thompson, Manager City Activation James Plozza, Manager Governance Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant Rod Sanderson, Acting Manager Environment - 3.12pm – 3.31pm Alecia Franklin, Animal Shelter Supervisor - 3.12pm – 3.31pm Abel Farrell, Manager Infrastructure Services – 3.12pm – 3.55pm Shelly Fanning, Strategic Planning - 3.32pm – 4.36pm Tina Bryant, Property Officer – 3.33pm – 4.34pm
Other persons present:	N/A
Apologies	Nil.
Matters considered:	• Animal Shelter Report. • Playground Renewal Program FY26/27 & FY27/28 • Property Freehold Land.
Council and officer items raised	• Flaherty's Lane trial works. • Early Learning and Childcare Centre announcement. • South West Victoria Alliance State Parliament Ministerial meetings. • Regional Cities Victoria State Parliament Ministerial meetings. • Fire Services Victoria Council visit. • Shared records department services. • Federal Assistance Grants briefing. • Bird flu update. • Former Library Building. • Environmental Health Officer secondment. • Mortlake Road planning matter. • Fire Night at Flagstaff Hill. • Botanic Gardens. • Potholes Howard Street/Banyan Street. • Allansford Flood Study. • Tiny Towns grants. • Library and Learning Centre. • Balmoral Road repairs. • Japanese Gardens maintenance.
Councillor Conflicts of Interest Disclosures Nil.	

Meeting close time:	5.08pm
Record completed by:	Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant

Informal Meeting of Council Record

Name of committee or group (if applicable):	Informal Meeting of Council (Councillor Briefing)
Date of meeting:	24 August 2026
Time meeting commenced:	3.00pm
Councillors in attendance:	Cr. B. Blain, Mayor Cr. W. Benter Cr B. Edis - Virtual Cr. V. Jellie AM Cr. M. Walsh Cr. R. Ziegeler – Virtual
Council officers in attendance:	Andrew Mason, Chief Executive Officer - Virtual Luke Coughlan, Director City Futures Peter Utri, Director Corporate Strategies Brooke Love, Director City Wellbeing James Plozza, Manager Governance Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant Peter Reid, Strategic Planning – 2.16pm – 2.58pm Nick Legoe, Acting Manager City Growth – 2.16pm – 3.04pm Shelly Fanning, Coordinator Strategic Planning – 2.16pm – 3.04pm Amy Cumming, Open Space Planner – 2.59pm – 3.04pm – Virtual Mark Waters, Acting Manager Assets & Projects Planning – 3.05pm – 3.19pm Thomas Hall, Coordinator Project Management - 3.05pm – 3.19pm Rod Sanderson, Acting Manager Environment – 3.20pm – 3.27pm Justin Harzmeyer, Coordinator Natural Environment & Sustainability – 3.20pm – 3.27pm
Other persons present:	Cal Hooper and Cassandra Tremblay, ARUP Consultants – 2.16pm – 2.58pm
Apologies	Cr. D. Arnott
Matters considered:	• Bushfield-Woodford Strategic Framework Plan. • Allansford Transport & Access Strategy Report. • Open Space Policy. • Warrnambool Foreshore Path Vegetation Management Plan 2026.
Council and officer items raised	• Commonwealth Home Support Program government 2 year extension. • RSL parking. • Quarterly meeting with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Cooperative. • Midfield Meats meeting. • Restrictions on façade colours on properties in the CBD.
Councillor Conflicts of Interest Disclosures Nil.	
Meeting close time:	3.40pm
Record completed by:	Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant

Informal Meeting of Council Record

Name of committee or group (if applicable):	Informal Meeting of Council (Councillor Briefing)
Date of meeting:	31 August 2026
Time meeting commenced:	3.00pm
Councillors in attendance:	Cr. B. Blain, Mayor Cr D. Arnott Cr. W. Benter Cr B. Edis Cr. V. Jellie AM Cr. M. Walsh – arrived 3.40pm Cr. R. Ziegeler – Virtual
Council officers in attendance:	Andrew Mason, Chief Executive Officer Luke Coughlan, Director City Futures Ann Van Zyl, Manager Financial Services Brooke Love, Director City Wellbeing James Plozza, Manager Governance Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant Maree Wyse, Service Manager Healthy Engaged Communities - 2.00pm - 2.29pm Jill Bourke, West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House Coordinator - 2.00pm - 2.29pm Thomas Hall, Coordinator Project Management – 3.00pm – 3.25pm & 4.40pm – 4.45pm Mark Waters, Acting Manager Assets & Projects Planning 3.25pm & 4.40pm – 4.45pm Justin Harzmeyer, Coordinator Natural Environment & Sustainability – 3.25pm – 3.27pm Rod Sanderson, Acting Manager Environment - 3.25pm – 3.27pm Nick Legoe, Acting Manager City Growth – 3.27pm – 3.33pm & 4.26pm – 4.39pm Paul Thompson, Manager City Activation – 3.34pm – 4.29pm Shelly Fanning, Coordinator Strategic Planning - 4.26pm – 4.39pm - Virtual
Other persons present:	Mel Stefferson, West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House Reference Group – 2.00pm - 2.29pm Amanda Kirkwood, 4th Year Social Work Student from Deakin University - 2.00pm - 2.29pm
Apologies	Nil
Matters considered:	• West Warrnambool Neighbourhood House – Annual Report 2025-2026. • Draft Operations Report, Financial Statements and Annual Performance 2025-2026. • Fees and Charges Reduction Policy. • Active Transport Fund Grant update. • Middle Island Project Annual Report. • DP2025-0002- 19 Horne Road Development Plan. • Aged Care Services Committee Meeting Minutes. • Warrnambool City Council Holiday Parks Strategy Plan 2026. • Locality Names Review. • Program Update 2026/27 – Footpaths and Cycleways.

	• Open Space Reserve Utilisation Opportunities. • Vacant Reid Oval building. • Mayoral Diary update.
Council and officer items raised	• Changchun, China delegation to Warrnambool. • Keep off the grass signage. • Bird flu video. • Aquarium domes. • Shipwreck Bay kiosk demolition. • Lighting on Warrnambool entry sign. • Design and layout of key worker cabins at Shipwreck Bay caravan park. • Lake Pertobe footpath lighting. • Container deposit scheme cages and bins.
Councillor Conflicts of Interest Disclosures Nil.	
Meeting close time:	5.23pm
Record completed by:	Wendy Clark, Executive Assistant

7.8. Mayoral & Chief Executive Officer Council Activities - Summary Report

Purpose

This report summarises Mayoral and Chief Executive Officer Council activities since the last Ordinary Meeting which particularly relate to key social, economic and environmental issues of direct relevance to the Warrnambool community.

Report

Date	Location	Function
5 August 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor – Hosted Civic Reception to celebrate successful grant applicants for 2026/27 Community Development Fund and Festival & Events Fund.
6 August 2026	Colac	Chief Executive Officer – Attended the Regional Development Australia Barwon South West Meeting.
8 August 2026	Warrnambool	Deputy Mayor – Attended and addressed the Kokoda Day Football Match Warrnambool vs Port Fairy.
10 August 2026	Virtual	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer – Met with Michaela Settle, MP, Minister for Rural & Regional Development.
11 August 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor – Met with Joe Ball, Commissioner for LGBTIQA+.
	Warrnambool	Mayor and Deputy Mayor – Attended the Japanese Garden tree planting ceremony.
12 August 2026	Melbourne	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer– Regional Cities Victoria Parliamentary meetings and Regional Cities Annual Forum and Leaders Reception.
13 August 2026	Melbourne	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer – South West Victoria Alliance Parliament House delegation.
14 August 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor – Met with visiting students from Miura, Japan.
	Warrnambool	Deputy Mayor – Attended Kings College 40th Anniversary Founders Day.
15 August 2026	Lake Gillear	Cr Willy Benter – Attended the National All Range Championships Medal Presentations.

Date	Location	Function
17 August 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer – Attended the Early Learning and Childcare Centre announcement at Deakin University.
18 August 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer – Attended the Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony and wreath laying.
19 August 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer - Met with Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation for the Q3 meeting.
	Warrnambool	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer – Met with Midfield Meats.
26 August 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor – Met with visiting Changchun delegation.
28 August 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer – Attended the South West Victoria Alliance Board meeting.
29 August 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor – Attended the Warrnambool Racing Pigeon Club manual loading of the pigeons for the Great Australian Pigeon Race.
30 August 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor – Opened the Warrnambool & District Artists Society 25 year old Time Capsule.
	Warrnambool	Mayor – Attended the celebration of the completion of displays at the Warrnambool RSL following a Department of Veterans Affairs $10,000 grant.
2 September 2026	Warrnambool	Mayor and Chief Executive Officer – Met with Chris Burson, One Nation Candidate for Western Victoria.

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH
SECONDED: CR RICHARD ZIEGELER

That the Mayoral & Chief Executive Officer Council Activities – Summary Report be received with the deletion of the 3 September 2026 item.

CARRIED - 6:0

8. Notice Of Motion

No Notices of Motion have been received.

9. General Business

Nil.

10. Urgent Business

Nil.

11. Suspension Of Standing Orders

MOVED: CR BILLY EDIS
SECONDED: CR MATTHEW WALSH

That Standing Orders be suspended to allow members of the public to depart.

CARRIED – 6:0

11.2. RESUME STANDING ORDERS

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH
SECONDED: CR WILLY BENTER

1. That Standing Orders be resumed.
2. That pursuant to the provisions of Section 66(2)(a) of the *Local Government Act 2020,* the meeting be closed to the public to enable consideration of the following reports:-
   a) Minutes of Confidential Meeting of Council held on 1 June 2026 – Section 3(1)(f);
   b) Minutes of the Audit & Risk Committee held on 11 November 2025, 3 March 2026 and 2 June 2026 – Section 3(1)(a);
   c) Minutes of the Aged Care Services Committee held on 28 July 2026 – Section 3(1)(g), and
   d) Minutes of CEO Employment Matters Advisory Committee Meeting held on 17 August 2026 – Section 3(1)(f).

CARRIED – 6:0

12. Section 66 Confidential Meeting

13. Resolution To Re-Open Meeting

MOVED: CR MATTHEW WALSH
SECONDED CR BILLY EDIS

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

CARRIED – 6:0

14. Close Of Meeting

The meeting closed at 4.47pm.

CHAIRMAN