

Attachments

Ordinary Meeting of Council

Nellie Ibbott Chambers, Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Hub, 275 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe, 3079

Monday 4 August 2025 7:00 PM

ATTACHMENTS

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ALGA National General Assembly 25-27 June 2025

This document provides a summary of the June 2025 ALGA National General Assembly, drawing on insights from notes from Cr. Matt Wood, Cr. Alida McKern and Cr. Mary O'Kane.

Topic	Notes
MC Welcome & Introduction Amy Crawford ALGA Chief Executive Officer	
Welcome to Country Selina Walker, Co-chair, ACT Reconciliation Council	
ALGA President's Address Cr Mayor Matt Burnett, ALGA President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record attendance at this NGA. Need for a more sustainable funding model in relation to social housing supply. Equity economics discussion. Insufficient funding has led to inadequate investment in social housing and lower than required construction rates. \$900m in Federal Government funding to local government is required to develop a 'build better' strategy.
Minister Address Hon Krisy McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories; Minister for Emergency Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% of grants from 2026 are being bought forward to this year. Emergency Management recently added to the Minister's portfolio because the Federal Government recognizes the link between emergency services and Local Government. People turn to Local Government during emergencies - municipalities shoulder much of the responsibility to respond to emergency and disaster management. Three big issues facing Local Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition to zero carbon; Affordable housing; Response to natural disasters. There are 537 Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Australia and each one is different. LGAs deliver services and programs throughout the life cycle - from birth to death. Disaster Ready Fund - \$1 billion over five years Local Government sustainability enquiry - changing nature of local government services; much more than 3Rs (roads, rates, rubbish). Delivering more services is an increasing challenge due to rate capping. Roads to recovery program Black spot programs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressed keenness for collaborative work – desire to help with challenges we face in our individual Councils.
Leader of the Opposition Address Dr Anne Webster MP, Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledgement of the personal sacrifice made by councillors to serve their community. The rules-based international order is undergoing change. Local government must uphold democratic principles and practices. Vic farmers upset about renewables impacts on farming - wind turbines and electrical transmission lines on properties disrupting food/fibre production. Criticized focus of Webster and McBain on regional areas - what about urban areas in which 80% of Australian's live? Wants to maintain nuclear as part of energy mix. Wants to pressure supermarkets to remunerate farmers fairly. Financial assistance grants unfair to the regions – they don't get enough of the pie. Wants to see continuation of Local Roads Community Infrastructure Fund - presently ending in 2026. Raised the question - do we go too far re cultural heritage protection?
Governor General Welcome & Address Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we engage in democracy? How do we educate younger generations on civics and democracy? What does it mean to be a citizen?
Australia & the New Geoeconomic Landscape Mark Bouris AM, business leader, entrepreneur & finance expert Dr Merriden Varrall, Partner, Geopolitics Australia Lead, KPMG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion of general economic principles. COVID pandemic – lingering effects and structural changes Polycrisis in geopolitics - accepted rules being challenged. Structural shifts in the international system. Breakdown in trust and rise of populism around the world. Geotechnology 'cold war' - countries competing for tech domination, artificial intelligence, space race. Tech seen as a tool of power. Increasing economic inequality. Climate crisis - instability of mass movements of people displaced by 2030, increasing tension over resources such as water. Economic v geopolitical logic. Stranger danger - increasing perception of the world as dangerous makes countries turn inward, hence rise of nationalism. Address change by breaking it down into chunks so as not to be overwhelmed.
From big picture to local action Jason Clarke	Discussion of how to identify and solve problems.

Debate on Motions, Day One	Information to be made available by ALGA shortly at https://alga.com.au/event/2025-national-general-assembly/
<p>Adapting Together: Local Government leadership in a Changing Climate</p> <p>Kieran Power, Senior Principal Nation Partners</p> <p>Lord Mayor Anna Reynolds, City of Hobart</p> <p>Lord Mayor Kon Vatsaklis, City of Darwin</p> <p>Amanda Pugh, Group Manager Community & Regional Prosperity, Lockyer Valley Regional Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving infrastructure such as drainage to meet the challenges of a changing climate. Focus on climate-proofing assets and infrastructure. Discussion of the value of adaptive action and positive return on each dollar spent. Example of the 2011 Grantham disaster in which flash flooding caused destruction of housing and 12 fatalities in the Lockyer Valley, Queensland. In the aftermath, a large-scale land swap was undertaken to relocate the town to higher ground, making it a successful example of community resettlement after a natural disaster. Emphasis on flood mitigation and making new homes more resilient to climate change. Hobart planning for natural disaster: it is the most exposed to bushfire of any city in Australia. Acknowledgement of the significant level of strategic work done by local government and the lag in funding support from federal and state governments. Need for more certainty of funding for climate action. Anna Reynolds spoke about the need for community ownership re climate action and the role of local government in building small community organizations to help themselves, particularly in disaster-prone areas. Discussion around building community capital: it takes five years to build capacity. Keiren Power talked about a zonal approach to climate adaptation: peer-to-peer learning between communities facing similar hazards.
<p>AI for Society: Shaping a Better Tomorrow</p> <p>Q&A Panel – Stephen Scheeler & Tim Golsby-Smith</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-modal AI is taking off. Assistive search is transforming knowledge. AI agents – agentic AI People will be more important than ever, there is much AI cannot do. AI misalignment with moral reasoning therefore humans need to be the guardrails. Being a conductor is the new role and skillset needed. Need to understand AI to use it properly. Potential for AI to be used in assessment of planning applications, freeing up planner for other work. MyLot app. Use of AI in suicide prevention and personalized treatment for brain function and mental health – analysis of MRIs, stimulating synapses, etc. US is focused on commercial activities and media coverage. Get curious – that is the superpower. AI is not a magic bullet.
<p>Panel Discussions</p> <p>Local Government Jobs & Skills</p>	<p>Local Government Jobs & Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be purpose-led

Housing & Community infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate beyond council boundaries. • Work at this at two speeds. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Here and now – what do we need? 2) Future planning - problems and roles needed. • Discussion around local government being given increased responsibility to manage this sector. <p>Housing & Community infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding programs need to be more visible – local government not always aware of available programs. • Certainty of funding preferred over one off grants. • Housing Australia Future Fund. • Toolkit being developed partnering with housing providers. • ALGA developing a template to assist application process. • Federal government committed to 1.5M homes in next five years. • Inclusionary Zoning discussed. • Query re private sector delivering the right mix of housing - need more examples of a variety of typologies, e.g. housing for ageing in place • Developers not incentivized to build anything other than what they know. • Cost of development in areas of high-value land becoming unaffordable for developers – permits being issued but not executed. • Master Builders spokesperson asserted that three- and four-storey developments should be built in growth areas where cheaper to build. • Planning reform is not where the solutions are, reducing red tape is not the answer. • “Hundreds of thousands” dwellings with planning approval have not been built. • Discussion around the high cost of basement car parking and exploring opportunities to invest in trees/parks/open space in lieu of car parking. • Brisbane Council introduced maximum car parking instead of minimum. • Discussion re bluefield development. • New suburbs can be up to 10 degrees hotter than established places. • Green spaces are sacrificing – are we building potential slums in the future?
Debate on Motions, Day Two	Information to be made available by ALGA shortly at https://alga.com.au/event/2025-national-general-assembly/
Networking events, Day Two	Banyule Councillors attended evening events. Fruitful time was spent meeting and networking with councillors and executives from many councils.

<p>National Priorities Need Local Solutions – Ministerial Engagement Forums</p> <p>Interactive panel sessions with federal MPs and MC David Speers</p> <p>Hon Kirsty McBain, Minister for Emergency Management; Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories</p> <p>Hon Julian Hill MP, Assistant Minister for Citizenship, Customs and Multicultural Affairs; Assistant Minister for International Education</p> <p>Hon Josh Wilson MP, Assistant Minister for Climate Change and Energy; Assistant Minister for Emergency Management</p> <p>Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister for Women, Minister for Government Services, Minister for Finance, Minister for the Public Service</p> <p>Hon Kevin Hogan MP, Shadow Minister for Trade, Investment and Tourism</p> <p>Hon Darren Chester MP, Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs</p>	<p>Shared themes and messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform to citizenship ceremonies is planned. • Key themes around funding or lack thereof. • Heavy focus on rural and regional municipalities. • Renewable energy and storage discussions. • Federal government is developing Australia's first National Climate Risk Assessment to understand the impacts of climate change. • Discussion re migration in regional areas – hope for people to stay in an area, not move to cities. The benefits of city living need to be available in regional areas - e.g. hospitals, good schools, etc. • Comment from the audience: 4% all taxation revenue in Australia is devoted to local government, yet local government delivers one-third of services. • More equitable distribution of funding is needed - some municipalities obtain 95% of their funding from grants. • Need for untied funding. • Discussion around land taxes and levies. • Tripartite solutions needed to tackle climate change - all levels of government t working together • Regional attendees expressed concern about renewables and negative impacts on their communities in relation to installations on agricultural land. • Green hydrogen touched on. • Pay parity for councillors discussed. <p>Hon Kristy McBain MP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommitted to reconstituting the sustainability inquiry to assess financial sustainability and how government budgeting can be more effective. • Urged the local government sector to bring forward innovative, "out-of-the-box" ideas for reform and collaboration. • Noted that local governments rely heavily on grants, which are unequally distributed. • Doubling of Roads to Recovery funding and a \$2.2 billion disaster recovery infrastructure commitment. Emphasized the need to balance large-scale projects with local concerns like potholes and school routes. • The housing crisis is national. Partnerships across federal, state and local government required to strategically invest in housing, infrastructure, healthcare, and education. • Importance of the upcoming National Climate Risk Assessment to guide adaptation investments, particularly for big infrastructure projects that councils can't fund on their own. <p>Hon Julian Hill MP</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Region-specific state migration plans and Designated Area Migration Agreements to address skilled migration and settlement challenges. • Call for better social and cultural infrastructure to help retain new arrivals and support families. • Criticized the politicisation and delay of citizenship ceremonies. Advocated for reforms to speed up ceremonies and reduce waiting times, framing citizenship as a life-changing milestone. • Need for federal leadership in housing, cities, and planning, despite the levers largely being held by state and LGs. • Supported equity in federal funding, stressing that councils differ widely in revenue capacity and service demands. <p>Hon Josh Wilson MP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severity of coastal erosion, storm surges, and climate vulnerabilities. • Leadership and data: no national solution exists yet, but data provision and risk assessment are essential first steps. Referenced pioneering efforts by some municipalities (e.g. City of Cockburn) as examples of best practice. • Pointed to existing federal programs (e.g., Disaster Ready Fund, Urban Rivers Program) but acknowledged limitations. • Called for professionalisation and modernisation of planning processes, including greater use of technology and AI to streamline decision-making and improve council efficiency. • Much variation in local government capability and need to build capacity through shared tools and funding mechanisms. <p>Hon Kevin Hogan MP and Hon Darren Chester MP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Australia is central to national prosperity. • Councils hosting large-scale renewable infrastructure must get consistent financial returns. • Lack of progress on LG sustainability reform. • Called for more direct funding models rather than short-term competitive grants. • Coalition is reassessing key climate and energy policies, including net zero and nuclear energy, with outcomes to be announced ahead of the next federal election. • Discussion around variation in councillor remuneration. <p>Senator the Hon Katie Gallagher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local governments are closest to communities and deliver services without the same resources or scale as state or federal governments. • Importance of partnerships, particularly in renewable energy, housing and planning reform. • Open to discussions about increasing untied funding or a pathway to 1% of federal revenue but expects improved
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	<p>efficiency and delivery in return (e.g. faster planning approvals).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Productivity and technology (like AI) could help local government become more efficient. Currently undertaking an AI "deep dive" in finance department.• Funding changes must be tied to government efficiency, not just needs.• Constitutional recognition of local government may not lead to better funding or outcomes.• Lack of support for councillors and mayors, especially women, young people and those without financial means.• Supported the idea of professionalising councillor roles, improving pay, superannuation, and offering maternity leave and work protections.• Online abuse, lack of job security and low allowances are barriers to broader participation.• Supports exploring national standards for councillor employment conditions.• Working on ensuring Australia gets appropriate returns from resources and green energy exports.
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ALGA NGA: Ministerial Meetings Summary

This document provides a summary of Ministerial meetings drawing on notes provided by Cr Mary O'Kane, Cr Alida McKern and Cr Matt Wood

Hon Kirsty McBain MP, Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories; Minister for Emergency Management

- Green fleet
- Heidelberg West Integrated Service Hub
- Ivanhoe Aquatic Centre redevelopment and electrification
- Social enterprise and inclusive employment

Partnership opportunities to deliver the services and infrastructure our community needs.

With population growth and pressure to respond to Victoria's housing crisis, all levels of government must work together to deliver the services and infrastructure our community needs now and into the future.

Banyule Council seeks partnerships with the Federal Government for projects that will help ensure a prosperous and sustainable future for our community and other municipalities.

A fully green fleet

A green fleet is essential if we are to reach our target of zero corporate emissions by 2028.

- We are asking the Federal Government to help create a greener transport sector by:
 - Investing in research and development of zero-emissions heavy vehicles and supporting the introduction of new technologies in Australia.
 - Partnering with Banyule Council to help us convert to a fully green fleet (e.g. heavy vehicles, power upgrades, charging station installation).
 - Working with the local government sector to pilot new zero-emissions heavy vehicles such as waste collection trucks and street sweepers.
- Banyule has committed to zero corporate emissions by 2028.
- This will be impossible unless there is considerable improvement in the development of low-emission and zero-emission heavy fleet vehicles.
- Council vehicles produce approximately 47% of the organisation's carbon emissions.
- We are making good progress replacing passenger vehicles (cars, buses, vans and utility vehicles) with electric vehicles, as there are many options now available in this market.
- Replacing our heavy fleet (garbage trucks, street sweepers, tractors, etc) is proving much harder. There are few viable options for low-emission and zero-emission heavy vehicles.
- To achieve a fully green fleet Council also needs to invest in infrastructure such as power upgrades and new vehicle charging stations.
- Large vehicles such as garbage trucks and street sweepers make up 57% of Banyule's total fleet. They operate on diesel fuel, which generates about 19% more emissions per litre than unleaded petrol.
- It is cost prohibitive for councils to convert their entire fleet to efficient alternatives and Banyule would like to partner with the Federal Government to share the cost of this.
- We are asking the government to help us meet our zero-emissions goal by partnering with us to invest in the research and development of a zero-emission heavy vehicle fleet.

- The government can take a lead in the sector by investing in the research and development of heavy vehicles and supporting the introduction of new technologies in Australia.

Heidelberg West integrated services hub

Residents of social and affordable housing thrive when supported by adequate local services.

- Banyule welcomes the commitment to social and affordable housing by State and Federal Governments.
- There are several large social and affordable housing developments in Heidelberg West. In the past two (2) years, more than 220 families and individuals have moved in to new social and affordable housing in the area.
- More social and affordable housing is planned for Heidelberg West. The State Government has funded 104 apartments in stage one (1) of the Bardia Estate. Council understands there are another three (3) or four (4) stages to come.
- The provision of stable housing is a basic human right and the first step in addressing the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our community.
- Residents of social housing often experience higher rates of poor health, disability and unemployment.
- When they have access to the right services and support, residents of social housing, including many young families in Heidelberg West, can thrive and participate in the local community.
- Heidelberg West is under-resourced with the support services the community needs. Existing services are at capacity.
- Many new residents and families do not have the basic services they need, putting them at risk of entrenched poor health, disadvantage and unemployment. Some face increased risk of further housing instability.
- Banyule Council is looking to partner with the government to deliver an integrated services hub in Heidelberg West.
- The services hub would include health services, disability support, youth programs, family support, a neighbourhood house and a library.
- Council has identified potential sites in Heidelberg West and is developing a plan for delivering the services hub.
- We would welcome support from the Federal Government to deliver this much needed infrastructure.

Ivanhoe Aquatic Centre redevelopment

We seek a partnership with the State and Federal Governments to update this key community health and recreation centre.

- Ivanhoe Aquatic is an ageing facility developed from the original training pool built for the Melbourne Olympics Games in 1956. It no longer meets the needs of the community and is in urgent need of repair and redevelopment.
- Ivanhoe Aquatic is a key health and recreation facility with a catchment area of more than 100,000 people. Important community programs include:
 - Learn-to-swim and water safety classes for children and adults
 - Health and fitness programs for all ages
- The learn-to-swim program is at capacity and many families are missing out.
- Ivanhoe Aquatic is not accessible to many people with disabilities.
- Banyule is predicted to have a significant increase in young children and an ageing population over the next 20 years, both key user groups of Ivanhoe Aquatic Centre.
- The costs of redevelopment are increasing steadily with every delay in the project.

- Banyule's two-step master plan for redeveloping Ivanhoe Aquatic: upgraded parking, changerooms and health and fitness rooms were completed in 2016; stage two (2) is the redevelopment of the pools and electrification of the facility.
- Banyule's two (2) aquatic centres run on gas heaters and produce the highest amount of carbon emissions of all Council activities, accounting for 52% of all emissions produced.
- We are excited to deliver on the electrification of WaterMarc, with \$2.3 million support from the Federal Government's Community Energy Upgrades Fund. We must also electrify Ivanhoe Aquatic to meet our commitment to net zero by 2028 and to future-proof this important community facility.
- To match an \$11 million contribution from Banyule Council, we are seeking:
 - \$14 million investment from the Victorian Government
 - \$14 million investment from the Federal Government
- Redevelopment of Ivanhoe Aquatic Centre will deliver many benefits to the community:
 - Regional economic benefits
 - Health benefits
 - Community engagement
 - Employment (during construction and ongoing)

Employment opportunities for people experiencing entrenched disadvantage

Help Banyule expand its leadership in social enterprise and inclusive local jobs.

- Banyule Council is looking to partner with the Federal Government to tackle entrenched disadvantage in Melbourne's northern region by supporting inclusive employment programs.
- Banyule is a leader in social enterprise and inclusive local jobs. Since 2018, we've helped create more than 800 jobs and training opportunities for people facing barriers to employment.
- Our award-winning programs are used as a model by other municipalities and local businesses (e.g. Inclusive Employment Program guide)
- As the first local government to implement a Social Enterprise Strategy, and with more than six (6) years' experience delivering inclusive employment outcomes we are well equipped to support them to deliver much-needed job outcomes to those facing barriers to work.
- Our initiative seeks to address systemic barriers to employment for people experiencing entrenched disadvantage by creating new supported job opportunities in retail, an area facing workforce shortages.
- These job opportunities will provide employment for people who are willing and able to work but require additional and nuanced supports to enter the workforce and remain employed.
- A Federal Government investment of \$700,000 investment over two (2) years will help create jobs and training for 170 people experiencing entrenched disadvantage.

Hon Kate Thwaites MP, Member for Jaga Jaga

Cr Mary O'Kane met informally with Kate Thwaites MP during a guided tour of Parliament House on Wednesday. The discussion touched on funding sources and federal funding opportunities, the opening speakers of the assembly and recent events in Banyule.

Networking opportunities

There were sundry unscheduled opportunities to meet other councillors, ministers and Members of Parliament at program sessions and at various social and networking events throughout the assembly.

DRAFT Councillor Interaction with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters

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Document control

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1. Introduction

The public expects that any engagement with lobbyists, developers, and planning matter submitters (whether they be an objector or supporter) and landowners relating to statutory and strategic planning matters and or land sales and land transactions be conducted with impartiality, ethical standards, and transparency.

Lobbying is a legitimate and crucial aspect of the democratic process. Lobbyists play a valuable role in facilitating the expression of individuals' and organisations' viewpoints on matters of public concern to the government, aiming to contribute to better outcomes for both individuals and the broader community.

Council in its role as the Responsible Authority for deciding planning permit applications or as Planning Authority for proposed amendments to the Banyule Planning Scheme, are required to make significant decisions that influence the built form and land-use patterns of the municipality. Councillors are expected to possess a comprehensive understanding of the processes, statutory obligations, and the various roles they must fulfill in this realm.

2. Purpose

Councillors are often required to make decisions about planning and developments within the City of Banyule and as part of seeking information, may interact with developers on upcoming projects.

Councillors from time to time also make decisions on the sale or acquisition of land.

This policy is relevant and applies to Councillors in their interactions with lobbyists, developers, planning matter submitters, land owners and other people with a direct interest in land sales and transactions, a planning scheme amendment, development plan, planning permit application, or any other planning decision under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, where Council is the Responsible Authority or the Planning Authority.

This policy serves to maintain, support and further strengthen the integrity of Banyule City Council and Councillors when engaging with developers, planning matter submitters and lobbyists, ensuring that interactions are conducted in an open, transparent and accountable manner.

3. Context

3.1 Organisational Context

The role of Council's administration is to evaluate planning proposals and offer an unbiased, expert assessment and recommendation to the Council.

When considering planning applications at Council meetings, Councillors consider all submissions received, along with the recommendations of Council officers before deciding whether to approve or refuse each application. Likewise, when considering proposed amendments to Banyule's planning scheme, Councillors are tasked with the consideration of all submissions and officer recommendations before determining whether to adopt or abandon these amendments.

To prevent any preconceived judgements that could affect the ultimate decision, Councillors must refrain from forming any final opinions on development applications and planning scheme amendments, until they have thoroughly reviewed the officer's reports and listened to all perspectives in debate.

3.2 Background

In August 2018, the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC) launched Operation Sandon to investigate allegations of corrupt conduct involving City of Casey Councillors and property developers. It also examined the adequacy of Victoria's current systems and controls for safeguarding the integrity of the state's planning processes.

Operation Sandon's findings extended beyond Casey, affecting planning and discretionary matters across various government levels. The investigation underscored shortcomings in regulating political donations and lobbying, creating opportunities for improper influence. Addressing these integrity risks is of utmost importance.

Notwithstanding any matters outlined in this policy, Councillors are free to express a preliminary stance on matters but should be willing to reassess their position when presented with new evidence or arguments. This is referred to as maintaining an 'open mind.' A councillor demonstrating an open mind will:

- genuinely listen to all arguments
- assess the merits of issues as a whole, irrespective of personal preferences
- consider all options and perspectives presented
- evaluate the merits and objections related to a matter.

Councillors should avoid any pre-conceived bias on planning decisions by not expressing a final opinion on a matter before participating in the decision-making process. Alternatively, Councillors who have demonstrated a pre-conceived bias by expressing a final opinion on a planning matter should not participate in the final decision-making process.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Banyule Planning Scheme	A statutory document that sets out rules and regulations, determined by the Victorian Government, to guide how land can be used, developed, and protected within the Banyule municipality, including zoning, overlays, and heritage protection.
Developer	<p>An individual, government agency or any other entity seeking to develop or use land for benefit through an application for a planning approval, planning scheme amendment or a comparable process, whether they are in the process of applying or considering applying.</p> <p>This encompasses consultants, advisors, agents, representatives, or individuals closely linked with the developer, who are designated to endorse or promote the developer's interests or proposal.</p> <p>The definition of Developers for the purpose of this policy is typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A business or individual who is seeking to gain Council approval for the use and/or development of land.

Term	Definition
Interacting/Interaction	Any material interaction, engagement or meeting, irrespective of whether it was expected, planned, solicited or reciprocated and includes all methods of communication whether verbal, electronic or otherwise, but excludes instances where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Councillor has not responded to unsolicited communication (including phone messages or emails). interactions that do not relate directly to a specific planning matter. where any reference to a planning matter has been sufficiently restricted so as not to invoke provisions of this policy – Councillor discretion is to be used.
Land sales and other land transactions	For the purpose of this policy land sales and transactions relate to any sale, transfer, lease, donation of or other land transactions/dealings that affect the rights and obligations associated with a piece of land.
Lobbyist	<p>An individual or organisation that seeks to influence legislation, regulation, government decisions, actions, or policies on behalf of a client or employer. This influence can be exerted through direct communication with policymakers, advocacy efforts, research dissemination, or strategic networking. Lobbyists operate across various levels of government—local, state, and federal—and may represent businesses, nonprofit organisations, professional associations, or other interest groups.</p> <p>A Lobbyist may act on behalf of a third-party client, such as a developer or industry representative, advocating for policies or regulatory changes that align with their client's interests.</p> <p>Employees or contractors conducting lobbying activities for external entities within Banyule City Council also fall under this definition.</p> <p>Lobbying practices can include formal submissions, meetings with officials, and public campaigns aimed at shaping government actions to benefit specific objectives.</p>
Meetings	Interactions that can be face to face, online, via a telephone call to specifically consider a planning application or planning scheme amendment.
Planning Application	Any application that requires assessment pursuant to the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> , the provisions of the Banyule Planning Scheme or a planning permit.
Planning Permit	A legal document that gives permission for a use or development on a particular piece of land in accordance with Part 4 of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> , including any conditions placed upon the permit.
Planning Scheme Amendment	An amendment to the planning scheme under Part 3 of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> .
Senior Officer	A Council officer suitably qualified in planning requirements to attend meetings and represent Council. This may be a Team Leader, Coordinator, Manager or if required the Director of City Development.

Term	Definition
Planning Matter Submitter	Refers to any individual or entity that provides input, feedback, or objections regarding a planning application, planning scheme amendment, development of planning policy or land sales and transactions. Such as but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local residents • community groups • business owners • government agencies or statutory bodies • professional consultants such as architects or urban planners
Undue Influence	Improper pressure or manipulation exerted by a person, entity or their representative to influence a decision of another person in an attempt to compromise their fair and objective assessment.

5. Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to ensure the transparent and responsible exercise of duties by elected representatives by:

- Ensuring that interactions between Councillors and lobbyists, developers, landowners and planning matter submitters, are conducted in an open, transparent and accountable manner;
- Providing guidance to Councillors on appropriate interactions with lobbyists, developers, and planning matter submitters through clearly defining expectations regarding Councillor behaviour, decision-making, and actions.
- Ensuring that the Council acts as both a Planning Authority and Responsible Authority in full compliance with both legal and ethical standards.
- Mitigating risks associated with the determination of planning applications and planning scheme amendments such as real and perceived conflicts of interest, and unethical or corrupt conduct.
- Mitigating risks associated with the sale of land and other land transactions.
- Provides reporting mechanisms that are available to the community, including maintaining registers required by the various Act or regulations and in accordance with Banyule's Public Transparency Policy.

6. Policy details

6.1 Interaction between Councillors, lobbyists and developers regarding planning or planning scheme amendments

One-on-one interactions with lobbyists and developers can potentially lead to accusations of bias against a Councillor/s involved.

- 6.1.1 At all times, Councillors are expected to abstain from knowingly participating in or engaging with lobbyist efforts aimed at influencing Councillor decision-making on planning matters.

- 6.1.2 Any individual interaction or one-on-one meetings between Councillors and lobbyists and/or developers should generally be avoided, particularly where a pending or current planning application or planning scheme amendment is before Council.
- 6.1.3 Where Councillors interact with lobbyists and/or developers, Councillors must adhere to the following:
 - 6.1.3.1 Councillors must disclose any conflicts of interest, whether general or material, in accordance with Part 6, Division 2 of the *Local Government Act 2020* and the Banyule City Council Governance Rules.
 - 6.1.3.2 Councillors will explicitly state that they cannot provide definitive advice concerning a matter or proposal. Instead, they can offer general information about Council procedures, processes, and policies.
 - 6.1.3.3 Councillors must refrain from providing any technical planning advice and avoid any pre-conceived bias on planning decisions by not expressing a final opinion on a planning matter until they have thoroughly reviewed the Council officer's reports and listened to all perspectives in debate.
 - 6.1.3.4 Councillors must emphasise that any opinions expressed by the Councillor are their personal views and do not represent the Council's potential stance on the prospective application or planning scheme amendment.
 - 6.1.3.5 Councillors must not solicit or accept any gift, in accordance with the Banyule City Councils Councillor Gift Policy.
 - 6.1.3.6 Councillors must not attend any meeting, including on-line meetings with lobbyists and developers without a senior Council officer present.
 - 6.1.3.7 Where interacting with lobbyists and/or developers in relation to planning applications or planning scheme amendments, Councillors may:
 - 6.1.3.7.1 Be open to discussing the benefits of developing within the Banyule Council and promoting appropriate development.
 - 6.1.3.7.2 Highlight Council's policies and strategic positions and freely discuss publicly available information about a particular matter or proposal.
 - 6.1.3.7.3 Encourage lobbyists and developers to obtain independent professional advice (where applicable).
 - 6.1.3.7.4 Advise applicants to consider contacting Council officers for advice and to arrange a pre-application meeting with Council officers.
 - 6.1.3.7.5 Suggest that developers engage in discussions with neighbours of the proposed site of the development about their potential application, as early resolution of concerns can save time.
 - 6.1.3.8 Councillors must register interactions with developers or lobbyists to address any perceived or real concerns regarding inappropriate or corrupt behaviour, conflicts of interest, or where a developer or lobbyist has attempted to unduly influence a Councillor's position on a planning matter.

6.2 Interaction between Councillors and Planning Matter Submitters

- 6.2.1 It is common for individuals making submissions, including objections to planning permit applications or planning scheme amendments, to actively engage with Councillors to advocate their positions or express concerns about planning applications on a frequent basis.
- 6.2.2 When interacting with planning matter submitters, Councillors should exercise caution in providing advice and limit their interaction to listening to the concerns and offering general information about Council procedures, processes, and policies.

- 6.2.3 Where a councillor perceives that a planning matter submitter has attempted to unduly influence their stance on a planning matter, the councillor must register this interaction.

6.3 Attending meetings and documenting interactions

- 6.3.1 Councillors engaging in meetings with planning lobbyists or developers should only do so when they are adequately briefed about the nature of the matter or a specific planning application.
- 6.3.2 Any meeting requests from lobbyists or developers will be managed through official Council channels, being the Mayor and Councillors office or via existing statutory and strategic planning processes.
- 6.3.3 Councillors are prohibited from meeting with lobbyists or developers in the absence of a Senior Council officer. Councillors must be accompanied by a Senior Council Officer at any such meetings. The presence of a Senior Council officer helps to ensure good governance, probity and record keeping of meeting attendees and discussion items.
- 6.3.4 Councillors are encouraged to include a Senior Council officer in meetings with planning matter submitters, particularly where the planning matter is complex or there is high community concern. Where an officer is not present, the Councillor is encouraged to record and submit the interaction.
- 6.3.5 Councillors will maintain a written record, relating to any material interactions with lobbyists and /or developers where they seek to directly engage on a planning matter before Council (or likely to come before Council), which must include:
- a) Names and titles of all attendees (and organisations they represent)
 - b) The date and time of the interaction
 - c) The format of the interaction (e.g., telephone call, email, or written correspondence)
 - d) A summary of the discussions that took place including matters covered / key points discussed
 - e) A summary of the Councillor's response to the interaction / matters discussed.
- 6.3.6 These written records must be submitted to the Manager Governance and Integrity within five (5) business days of the interactions taking place. A copy will be placed in the corresponding subject file within the Council's document management system.
- 6.3.7 Councillors are exempt from recording interactions during consultation meetings arranged by officers as part of the planning application process. However, any material interaction (directly related to a planning matter) that may occur independently at that consultation meeting with a lobbyist, developer, or planning matter submitter must be documented and submitted by the Councillor.
- 6.3.8 A Record of Councillor meeting record (where required) will be completed independently of this process by the appropriate officer and submitted in accordance with Chapter 7, Rule 81 of the Governance Rules. A Record of Councillor Meeting record does not negate the need for a Councillor to maintain and submit a written record of any separate interactions with lobbyists, developers and planning matter submitters.
- 6.3.9 Council will maintain and publish online via its website, a register of interactions and meetings of Councillors with lobbyists, developers and planning matter submitters, noting that access to the public register will uphold the requirements of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.
- 6.3.10 The register of interactions will be updated monthly, with updates deferred to the next month with recorded interactions if no entries are made.

6.4 Matters relating to enforcement, public hearings or mediations

- 6.4.1 Councillors will not seek to influence any enforcement or compliance issues. Any approaches made to a Councillor, from a lobbyist, developer or planning matter submitter must be referred to Council officers for response, to avoid any actual or perceived influence on a compliance process.
- 6.4.2 Councillors may receive requests to attend hearings before Planning Panels Victoria, VCAT compulsory conferences, mediations or hearings, or a Magistrates Court hearing in support of a planning matter

submitter or developer on a matter that has been determined by Council (including under delegation by Council officers). Councillors should only attend such hearings to observe and in support of the formal position of Council, as the Responsible Authority or Planning Authority and act in accordance with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

6.5 Councillor Conduct - Land Dealings

Councillors must not discuss or communicate, whether formally or informally, any actual or potential land sales, acquisitions, or related land transactions with any party other than designated Council officers authorised to manage such matters. This restriction applies unless the matter forms part of an advertised public planning process, in which case Councillors must act in accordance with the provisions, and interaction and disclosure requirements of this policy.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Party/parties	Roles and Responsibilities	Timelines
Councillors	Ensures compliance with this policy in reference to interactions with lobbyists, developers and planning matter submitters.	Ongoing
Chief Executive Officer	Provides guidance for circumstances that are not provided for under the Policy.	As required
Director City Development	Provides guidance for circumstances that are not provided for under the Policy. Ensures compliance with this policy in reference to interactions with lobbyists, developers and submitters and recording of same.	As required Ongoing
Manager Governance and Integrity	Administers and reviews this Policy. Policy review will be undertaken in consultation with Manager City Planning, Safety & Amenity. The Governance team (on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer) is tasked with maintaining the Register of Interactions with lobbyists, developers, and submitters. This register will be accessible to the public in an electronic format via Council's website and updated monthly.	Ongoing
Manager City Planning, Safety & Amenity	Reviews this policy in consultation with Manager Governance & Integrity. Ensures compliance with this policy in reference to interactions with lobbyists, developers and submitters and recording of same.	Ongoing
Coordinator Governance and Integrity	Administers this Policy. Oversees the monitoring of the Register of Councillor Interactions with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters. Ensures the register is updated on a monthly basis on Council's website.	Ongoing
Statutory Planning	Ensure any meeting requests are managed in consultation with the Mayor and Councillors office. Where such meetings include 2 or more councillors officers must submit a record of Councillor meeting to the Governance and Integrity team in accordance with Chapter 7 Rule 81 of the Governance Rules after the meeting has occurred. This is in addition to and independent of the Councillor requirement to submit an interaction. Arrange for Council reporting when required and ensure legislative requirements are met.	Ongoing
Mayor and Councillors office	Manage meeting requests from lobbyists, developers and/or submitters in consultation with the Statutory Planning team.	Ongoing

8. Monitoring, Evaluating and Review

The Policy will be reviewed every four (4) years and/or when updates or enhancements are required.

The Governance & Integrity team will oversee the monitoring of the Register of Councillor Interactions with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters.

The Register of Councillor Interactions with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters will be made available on the Council's website, as stipulated by this policy.

9. Administrative Updates

From time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this policy.

Where an update does not materially alter this policy, such a change may be made administratively. Examples of minor administrative changes include changes to names of council departments or positions, or a minor amendment to legislation that does not have material impact.

Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this policy, it must be considered by Council.

10. Associated documents

- CD 18845 Model Councillor Code of Conduct
- CD 18495 Councillor Gift Policy
- CD 17788 Governance Rules and Election Period Policy
- CD 16674 Councillor and Staff Interaction Protocols
- CD 14452 Fraud and Corruption Control Policy
- CD 15487 Public Interest Disclosure Procedure
- Register of gifts, benefits, and hospitality
- Conflicts of interest register
- Summary of Personal Interest Returns
- Council meeting minutes – including disclosures of conflicts of interest and records of meetings organised or hosted by Council
- Summary of Election Campaign Donation Returns
- Register of Interactions with Lobbyists, Developers and Submitters

11. References and Legislative Context

This policy supplements the requirements and processes applied to Councillors as required by:

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Planning & Environment Act 1987*
- *Subdivision Act 1988*

- *The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) Act 1998*
- IBAC Operation Sardon – Summary Recommendations
- Local Government Inspectorate Guidelines, August 2022, Interactions with developers must be appropriate | Local Government Inspectorate (lgi.vic.gov.au)
- Local Government Inspectorate, Summer 2023 - Local government integrity matters Councillors must have an open mind | lgi.vic.gov.au



Council Motions – MAV

1. Permanent Truck Ban in the North East

- [MAV Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#)
- [MAV Annual Plan 2024-2025](#)

Motion Topic	Permanent Truck Ban in the North East
Background and context	<p>North East link will create a connection from M80 Ring Road to M3 Eastern freeway.</p> <p>Historically this link has been Greensborough Road, Rosanna Road, Banksia Street and Manningham Road.</p> <p>It is simply not reasonable to assume the completion of the North East Link and associated freeway upgrades will, on its own, resolve the traffic pressure through Banyule, Manningham and Nillumbik —especially that generated by heavy freight movement. Our community deserves a clear plan to protect safety, efficiency, and amenity once construction is complete.</p> <p>An excerpt from the North East Link Ministers Assessment of Environmental Effects, November 2019. Pg 38 – 39:</p> <p>“Rosanna Road Multiple submitters raised concerns about truck traffic on Rosanna Road. Rosanna Road is currently subject to a truck ban from 10pm to 6am for trucks in excess of 16.5 tonnes and this is not proposed to change with the project.</p> <p>The project is anticipated to deliver a significant redistribution of trucks away from arterial roads, including Rosanna Road, and I agree with the IAC that there will be improved amenity and safety on Rosanna Road once the project is operational. However, Rosanna Road remains a key arterial route for over-dimensional trucks and placarded vehicles, and any further restriction on its use was not supported by the Department of Transport.</p> <p>I support the IAC’s recommendation that upon completion of the project, further investigations should be undertaken by VicRoads and the Department of Transport to assess the level of non-local truck traffic on Rosanna Road and to ascertain the need for additional management measures. These measures may include the possibility of extending the existing truck curfew (including to other arterial roads) and/or the need to upgrade the road given its limitations with respect to road safety (IAC Recommendations 9b and 10).”</p> <p>The North-East Truck Curfew is already in place for Rosanna Road, Lower Plenty Road, Waiora Road, Waterdale Road, Ryans Road, Para Road, St Helena Road and Bolton Street. It seems appropriate to now introduce a permanent ban on these roads, whilst recognising likely need to maintain access for OD, placard, and local delivery trucks.</p> <p>Collectively we will establish a coordinated advocacy strategy leading into the 2026 state election specifically on this issue, with the goal of</p>

	<p>securing state commitment to whole of Banyule local amenity, safety and liveability post-NEL</p> <p>One freeway through Banyule is enough. We don't need two.</p>
Submitted by	Cr Matt Wood
Relevance to MAV Strategic Plan	<p>Yes</p> <p>Strategic Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected Places • Health & Wellbeing
Motion	<p><i>That the MAV:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Writes to the Premier of Victoria, the Hon. Jacinta Allan and the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Hon. Melissa Horne, in support of Banyule City Council's advocacy to implement a permanent truck ban in alignment with the Ministers assessment of North-East Link Environmental Effects, post completion of the North East Link.</i> <i>Writes to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Brad Battin, MP and the Shadow Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Mr Danny O'Brien, MP, Spokesperson for Public Transport and Roads for the Australian Greens - Victoria, Katherine Copsey, MP in support of Banyule City Council's advocacy to implement a permanent truck ban in alignment with the Ministers assessment of North-East Link Environmental Effects, post completion of the North East Link.</i>

2. Social and Affordable Housing Design Standards

- [MAV Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#)
- [MAV Annual Plan 2024-2025](#)

Motion Topic	Social and Affordable Housing Design Standards
Background and context	<p>Council is concerned that the recent planning reforms have diluted the Better Apartment Design Standards required for social and affordable residential developments, particularly for projects seeking fast track approval via the Development Facilitation Pathway's (DFP) <i>'Significant residential development with affordable housing - Clause 53.23'</i>.</p> <p>Quality design contributes to a community that is healthy, inclusive, and equitable and provides for cohesiveness and connection. The State Government needs to ensure that future occupants of social and affordable residential developments are living in well-designed dwellings, and access the health, wellbeing, economic and environmental benefits associated with quality design. This must be non-negotiable and not able to be waived or varied by the Minister for Planning, especially if being assessed through Clause 53.23.</p> <p>Council has further concern that the incentivisation of design excellence through Clause 53.25 may have the effect of creating a two-tiered system of liveability in our communities. By giving developers two housing pathways; one that rewards housing affordability, the other, that rewards design excellence, there is a risk that the most disadvantaged and vulnerable populations are made to live in substandard housing stock, while the more affluent can 'buy' the good design elements (such as better cross-ventilation) that should be available to all.</p> <p>Council asks that the State Government requires to ALL residential developments to meet its "Design Principles", not just projects being assessed through Clause 53.25.</p>
Submitted by	Cr Alicia Curry
Relevance to MAV Strategic Plan	<p>Yes</p> <p>Strategic Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connected Places• Health & Wellbeing• Climate & Regenerative Design• Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Motion	<p>That the MAV:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. <i>Calls on the State Government to ensure that all residential developments are subject to the same good design standards, including social and affordable housing projects</i>

3. Tree Canopy Targets to Align with Plan for Victoria.

- 4. [MAV Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#)
- 5. [MAV Annual Plan 2024-2025](#)

Motion Topic	Townhouse & Low-Rise Apartment Code Tree Canopy Targets to align with 'Plan for Victoria'
Background and context	<p>Clause 55 Townhouse & Low-Rise Apartment code tree canopy targets are set too low and will undermine the State's own 'Plan for Victoria' canopy target.</p> <p>The recent updates to Clause 55 for Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Code (the code) and supporting guidelines remove variations that result in built form and landscape design changes in current and future planning permit applications. Of particular concern to Council is the 10% target (<1000m2) or 20% for >1000m2 now set as a 'deemed to comply' standard. Not only does it impede Council's ability to meet its own Urban Forest Strategy canopy targets, but is also incongruous with the State's own 30% tree canopy target for urban areas, as outlined in 'Plan for Victoria'.</p> <p>This gap between planning policy and the new provisions enshrined in the code, also indicates an expectation that local Councils and communities will do the 'heavy lifting' in the public realm. This is unrealistic and, in a time of a climate crisis, a disappointing step backwards.</p> <p>Banyule's Urban Forest Strategy, adopted in 2023, supports the planning, management and maintenance of Banyule's highly valued urban forest for the next 10 years, particularly in relation to climate adaptation, biodiversity and amenity.</p> <p>The Urban Forest Strategy set a target of 30% canopy cover across all residential areas and 45% canopy cover across the footpath and local road network by 2050, which was on track to achieve.</p> <p>In response to the lower targets now required by the State Government through Clause 55, Council has undertaken detailed testing of a range of tree canopy targets (10, 20 & 30%), against different typologies. This work found that, in most cases, up to 20% can be readily achieved without compromising density or design. For lower density typologies, 10% was clearly an underperformance in terms of canopy provision.</p> <p>To align planning controls with canopy cover ambitions requires a nuanced, typology specific approach that supports increased tree planting, through design innovation and site responsiveness. The changes to Clause 55 have removed this opportunity.</p> <p>Council requests the State Government increase the canopy target in Clause 55 to align with the 30% target currently sent in 'Plan for Victoria'.</p>
Submitted by	Cr Curry
Relevance to MAV Strategic Plan	Yes

<div>Strategic Objectives:</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connected Places• Health & Wellbeing• Climate & regenerative design</div>	
Motion	<div><i>That the MAV:</i><div><div>1. <i>Request that the State Government revise Clause 55 - Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment code to align canopy targets with the 30% target as required in Plan for Victoria.</i></div></div></div>

BANYULE CEMETERIES TRUST					
INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO THE 30 JUNE 2025					
	LEDGER NO	BUDGET 2024-25	ACTUALS 30-Jun-25	VARIANCE 30-Jun-25	% VARIANCE TO BUDGET
INCOME					
Burial Purchase & Interment		\$92,540	\$205,172	\$112,632	121.71%
Ashes Purchase & Interment		\$67,455	\$124,401	\$56,946	84.42%
Monument & Plaque Fee		\$49,000	\$54,727	\$5,727	11.69%
Interest on Investment & Other Income		\$60,000	\$104,400	\$44,400	74.00%
Government Grants	65300.0021.6428	\$15,600	\$13,636	(\$1,964)	(12.59%)
Total Income		\$284,595	\$502,336	\$217,741	76.51%
EXPENDITURE					
Administration		\$198,848	\$207,472	(\$8,624)	(4.34%)
Maintenance		\$102,000	\$87,927	\$14,073	13.80%
Burial Costs		\$45,000	\$74,016	(\$29,016)	(64.48%)
Restorations, Equipment & Other		\$5,000	\$6,780	(\$1,780)	(35.59%)
Plaque Placements	65300.7451.1161	\$20,000	\$28,434	(\$8,434)	(42.17%)
Total Expenditure		\$370,848	\$404,629	(\$33,781)	(9.11%)
OPERATING SURPLUS/(LOSS)		(\$86,253)	\$97,707	\$183,960	213.28%
Reserve Funds (opening balance)		\$1,345,341.68	\$1,345,341.68	(\$0)	(0.00%)
Plus Surplus / Less Operating Loss		(\$86,253.00)	\$97,706.63	\$183,960	213.28%
Less Capital Expenditure		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0	0.00%
Reserve Funds (closing balance)		\$1,259,088.68	\$1,443,048.31	\$183,959	14.61%

Abstract of accounts 2024-25

Submitted in accordance with s. 52 /s. 57 of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003*. Due 1 September 2025.

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Cemetery trust name	Banyule Cemeteries Trust
----------------------------	--------------------------

General account

Income	\$	¢	Expenditure	\$	¢
Balance in bank at start of financial year	112,875		Secretary and other administrative staff**	130,350	
Cash in hand at start of financial year			Grounds staff**		
Investments at start of financial year	1,232,467		Gravedigging**	74,016	
Interest received*	87,323		Contractors**	85,658	
Fees received for cemetery products/ services (graves, memorials, interments, etc.)*	398,112		Memorialisation**	28,434	
Other income*	3,264		Office expenses**	61,283	
Transfers from perpetual maintenance account/s			Buildings (new construction)**		
Department of Health grants	13,636		Insurance**		
Other grants and donations			Works (new areas, repairs, fencing, drainage, etc.)**		
Unpresented cheques			Other expenses**	24,888	
Total	1,847,678		Balance in bank at end of financial year	101,417	
			Cash in hand at end of financial year		
			Investments at end of financial year	1,341,631	
			Total	1,847,678	

- ☒ Confirm the **totals of the income and expenditure columns are equal**. A discrepancy between the two column totals may indicate an error in the recorded data.
- ☐ Confirm **bank statement/s displaying the closing bank and investment balances** are attached.
- ☐ Confirm a **review or audit** is attached, **if the trust meets the threshold**. See *Abstract of accounts instructions and checklist 2024-25* for threshold.

Perpetual maintenance account/s

Complete this section if your trust has a separate account/s designated for perpetual maintenance funds. Do not re-enter bank account or investment information already entered in the 'General account' section. The income and expenditure totals must balance.

Income	\$	¢	Expenditure	\$	¢
Balance at start of financial year			Expenditure / transfer to general account		
Interest received			Balance at end of financial year		
New funds received					
Total			Total		

- ☒ Confirm the **totals of the income and expenditure columns are equal**. A discrepancy between the two column totals may indicate an error in the recorded data.
- ☒ Confirm **bank statement/s displaying the closing perpetual maintenance account/s balances** are attached.

Assets and liabilities

Record the total value of assets in each category. If the trust has no assets or liabilities, enter a zero at both totals.

Assets	\$
Key structures (Examples: office, mausoleum, chapel, toilet facility, niche wall)	41,000
Minor structures (Examples: rotunda, shed, seating)	23,000
Major machinery (Examples: tractor, ride-on mower)	
Small machinery (Examples: computer, grave shoring)	
Miscellaneous equipment (Examples: hand tools, wheelbarrow)	
Total	64,000

Liabilities	\$
Monies owed to a third party	170,632
Monies committed to expenditure	60,760
Other	
Total	168,392

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Right of interment (ROI) and interment information

Cemetery name	Banyule Cemeteries Trust
----------------------	--------------------------

Where accurate numbers are not available, please provide estimates.

If your trust manages multiple cemeteries (active or closed), please provide information for each site in a separate table by making copies of this page.

Bodily remains

Question	Response
Number of ROI for bodily remains (at-need) sold in 2024-25	2
Number of ROI for bodily remains (pre-need) sold in 2024-25	1
Number of interments of bodily remains (first burial in a plot) in 2024-25	7
Number of interments of bodily remains (second or subsequent burial in a plot) in 2024-25	28

Cremated remains

Question	Response
Number of ROI for cremated remains (both at-need and pre-need) sold in 2024-25	28
Number of interments of cremated remains (in graves and memorials such as niche walls) in 2024-25	40

Cemetery Capacity

Question	Response
Total number of bodily remains interred since the establishment of the cemetery	18176
Number of unsold ROI for bodily remains at 30 June 2025 Include the estimated number of plots that could be created in areas of the cemetery that have the potential to be developed. The department collects this information to understand the remaining burial capacity in Victorian cemeteries.	17
Estimate how many more years there will be ROI for bodily remains (at-need) available for sale in the cemetery (including in areas that are yet to be developed)	3

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Statutory declarations

Three trust members (the chairperson and two other trust members) must execute a statutory declaration.

Statutory declaration – trust member 1 (chairperson)

Name:	
Address:	
Occupation:	

I, (name, address and occupation stated above), make the following statutory declaration under the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018**:

The above abstract of accounts for the financial year 2024-25 is true and correct for the trust mentioned below.

Cemetery trust:	
-----------------	--

I declare that the contents of this statutory declaration are true and correct and I make it knowing that making a statutory declaration that I know to be untrue is an offence.

Signature of person making declaration:	
Declared at: (City, town or suburb in the state of Victoria)	
Date:	

Statutory declaration witness

Note: See Checklist for details on how to witness statutory declarations remotely via audio visual link.

Note: Stamp of name, capacity and/or address accepted in table below.

Name:	
Capacity in which authorised to witness statutory declaration:	
Address:	

I, (name, capacity and address stated or stamped above), am an authorised statutory declaration witness* and I sign this document in the presence of the person making the declaration:

Signature of statutory declaration witness:	
Date:	

*A person authorised under s. 30(2) of the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018** to witness the signing of a statutory declaration

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Statutory declaration – trust member 2

Name:	
Address:	
Occupation:	

I, (name, address and occupation stated above), make the following statutory declaration under the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018**:

The above abstract of accounts for the financial year 2024-25 is true and correct for the trust mentioned below.

Cemetery trust:	
------------------------	--

I declare that the contents of this statutory declaration are true and correct and I make it knowing that making a statutory declaration that I know to be untrue is an offence.

Signature of person making declaration:	
Declared at: (City, town or suburb in the state of Victoria)	
Date:	

Statutory declaration witness

Note: See Checklist for details on how to witness statutory declarations remotely via audio visual link.

Note: Stamp of name, capacity and/or address accepted in table below.

Name:	
Capacity in which authorised to witness statutory declaration:	
Address:	

I, (name, capacity and address stated or stamped above), am an authorised statutory declaration witness* and I sign this document in the presence of the person making the declaration:

Signature of statutory declaration witness:	
Date:	

*A person authorised under s. 30(2) of the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018** to witness the signing of a statutory declaration

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Statutory declaration – trust member 3

Name:	
Address:	
Occupation:	

I, (name, address and occupation stated above), make the following statutory declaration under the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018**:

The above abstract of accounts for the financial year 2024-25 is true and correct for the trust mentioned below.

Cemetery trust:	
------------------------	--

I declare that the contents of this statutory declaration are true and correct and I make it knowing that making a statutory declaration that I know to be untrue is an offence.

Signature of person making declaration:	
Declared at: (City, town or suburb in the state of Victoria)	
Date:	

Statutory declaration witness

Note: See Checklist for details on how to witness statutory declarations remotely via audio visual link.

Note: Stamp of name, capacity and/or address accepted in table below.

Name:	
Capacity in which authorised to witness statutory declaration:	
Address:	

I, (name, capacity and address stated or stamped above), am an authorised statutory declaration witness* and I sign this document in the presence of the person making the declaration:

Signature of statutory declaration witness:	
Date:	

*A person authorised under s. 30(2) of the **Oaths and Affirmations Act 2018** to witness the signing of a statutory declaration

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Submission

Under s. 52(3) of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2003*, a cemetery trust must submit a report for each financial year to the Secretary of the Department of Health by 1 September in the following financial year.

End of financial year bank, investment and perpetual maintenance account statements must be provided with this form and [emailed to the Divisional Portfolio Entity and Appointments Advisory Unit](mailto:cemeteries@health.vic.gov.au) at <cemeteries@health.vic.gov.au>.

Email is the department's preferred method to receive the abstract and accompanying documents. If you do not have access to email, the documents can be posted to:

The Manager
Divisional Portfolio Entity and Appointments Advisory Unit
Department of Health
GPO Box 4057
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

To receive this document in another format, phone 1800 034 280, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or [Divisional Portfolio Entity and Appointments Advisory Unit](mailto:cemeteries@health.vic.gov.au) <cemeteries@health.vic.gov.au>.

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OFFICIAL

Proposed Council Meeting Dates 2026



Month	Date (Monday)	Public Holidays
February	9	
March	2 23	Monday 9 March – Labour Day
April	13	Friday 3 April – Good Friday Monday 6 April – Easter Monday
May	4 25	
June	22	Monday 8 June – King's Birthday
July	13	
August	3 24	
September	14	Friday 25 September – Grand Final Day (TBC)
October	5 26	
November	10 Mayoral Election (Tuesday) 16	Tuesday 3 November – Melbourne Cup
December	7	

2026 Council Meetings

Public Holiday
Council Meeting
Mayoral Election – Tuesday

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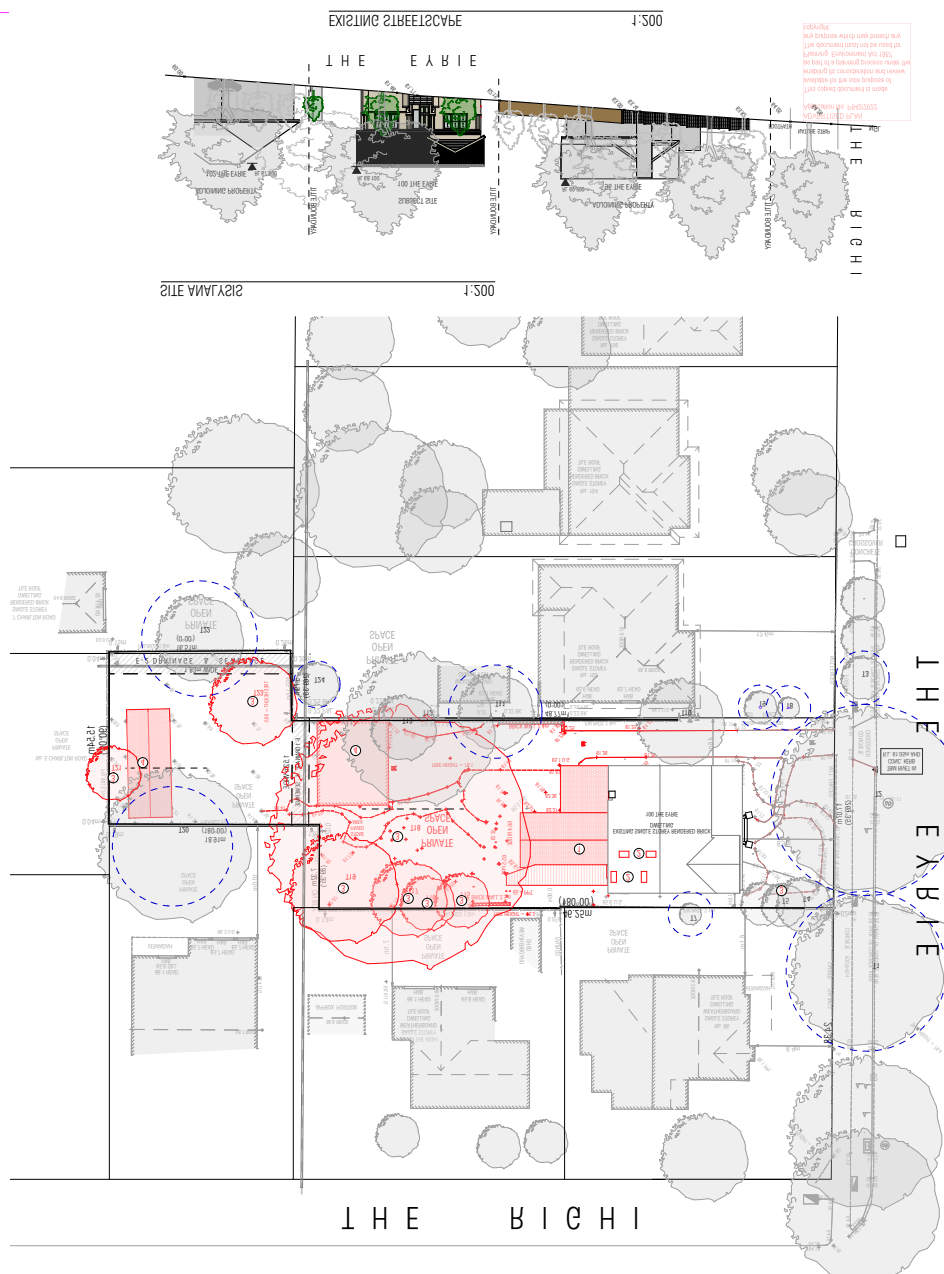
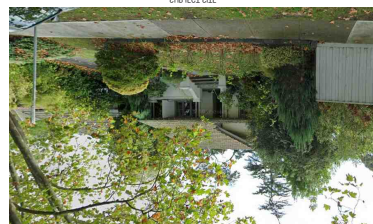
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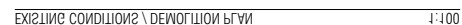
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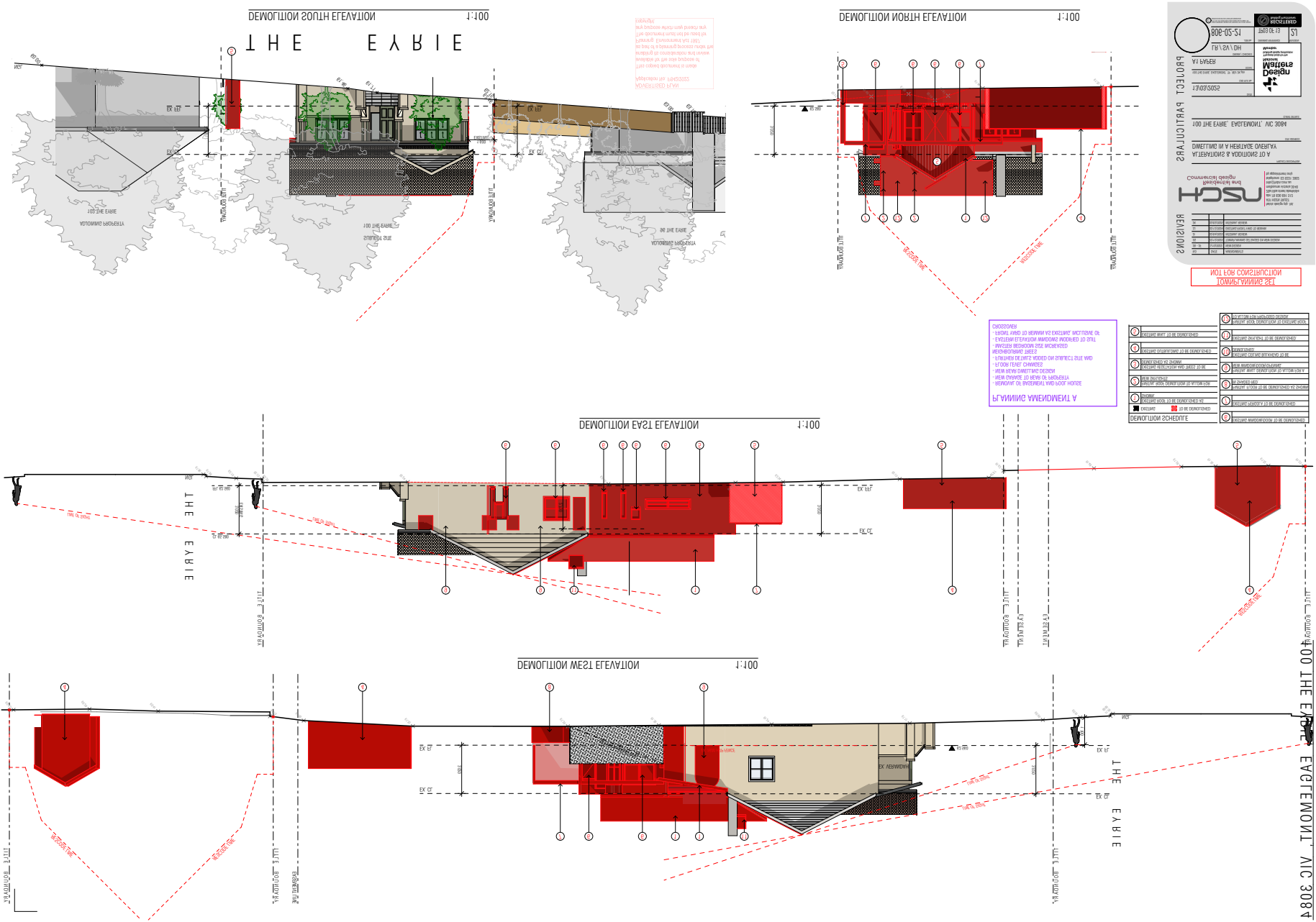
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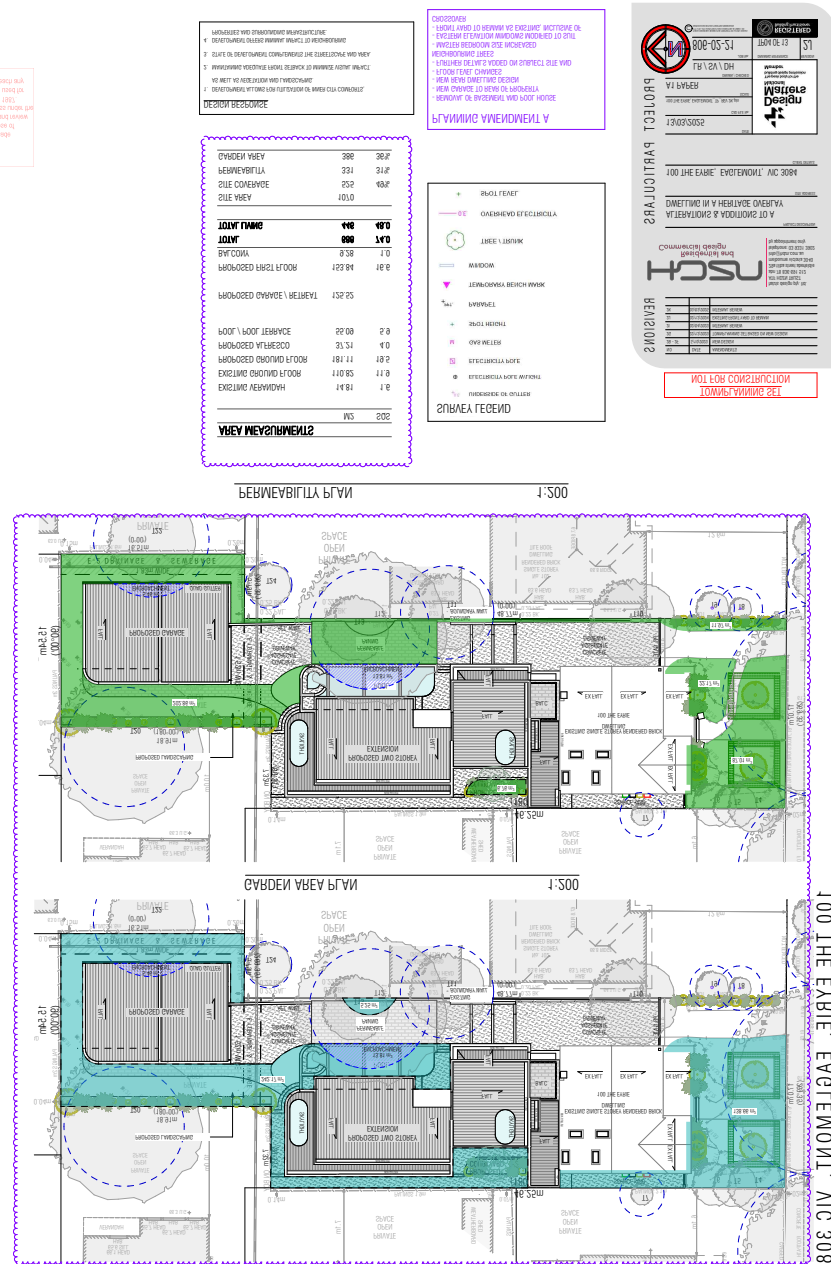
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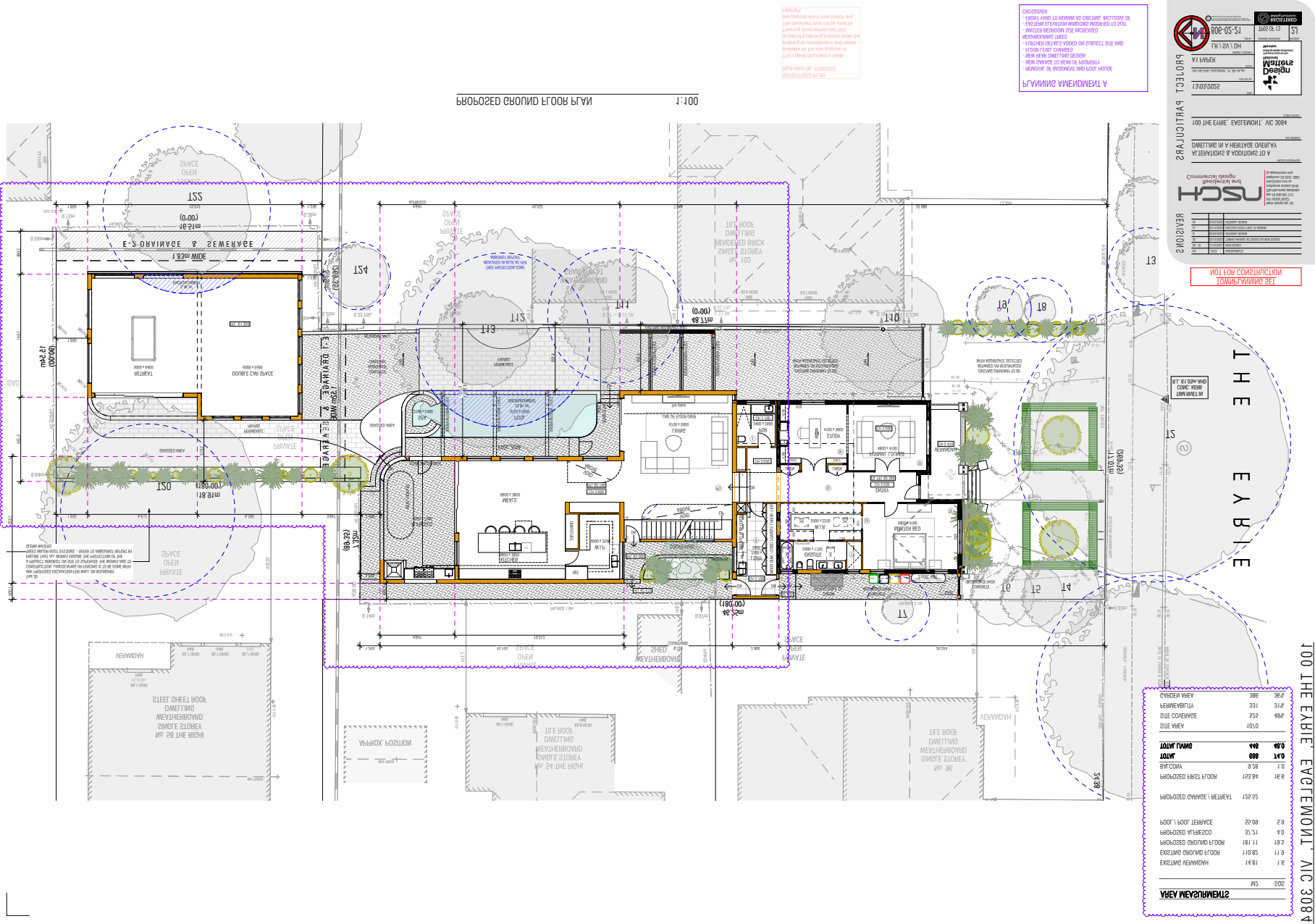


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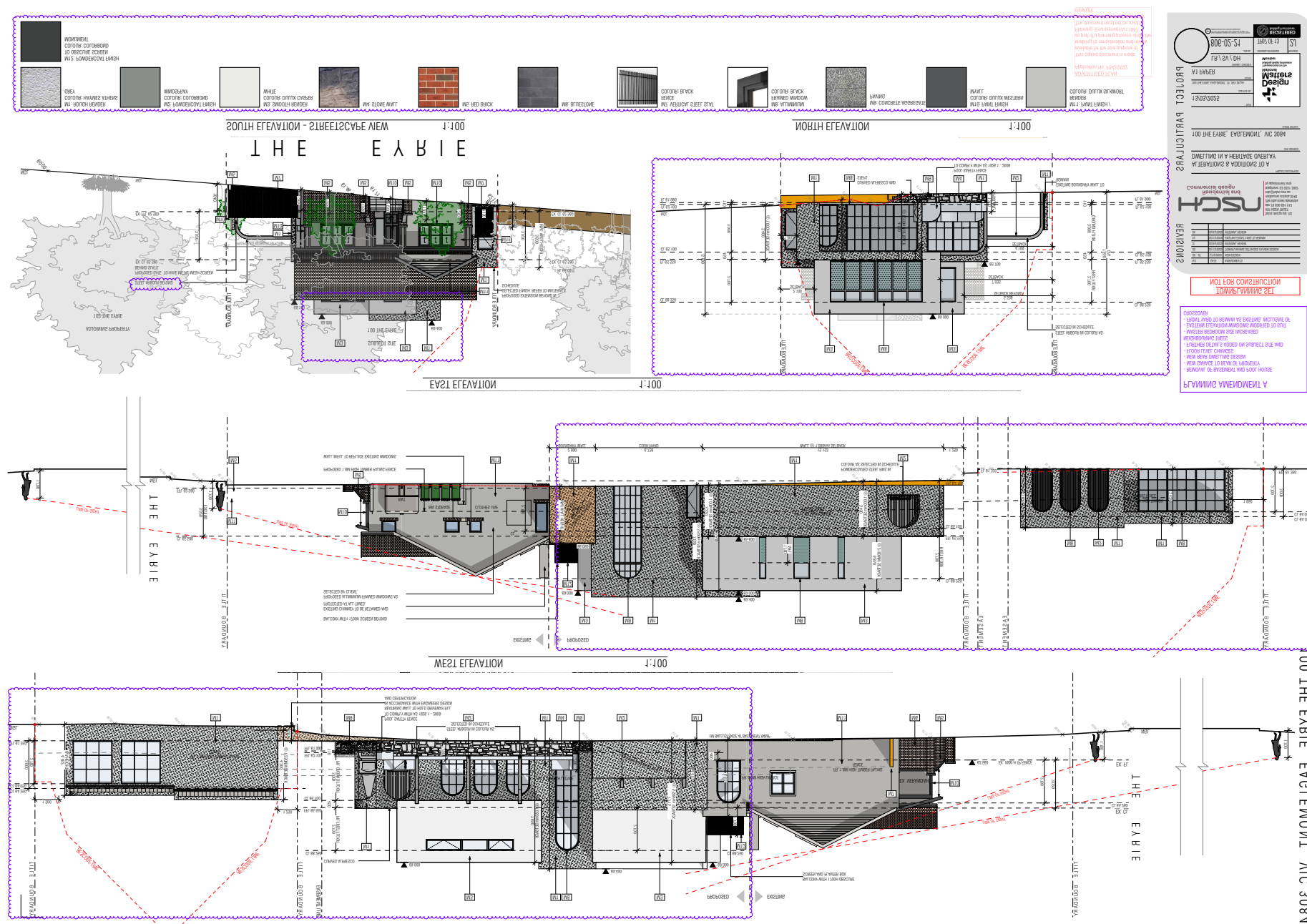


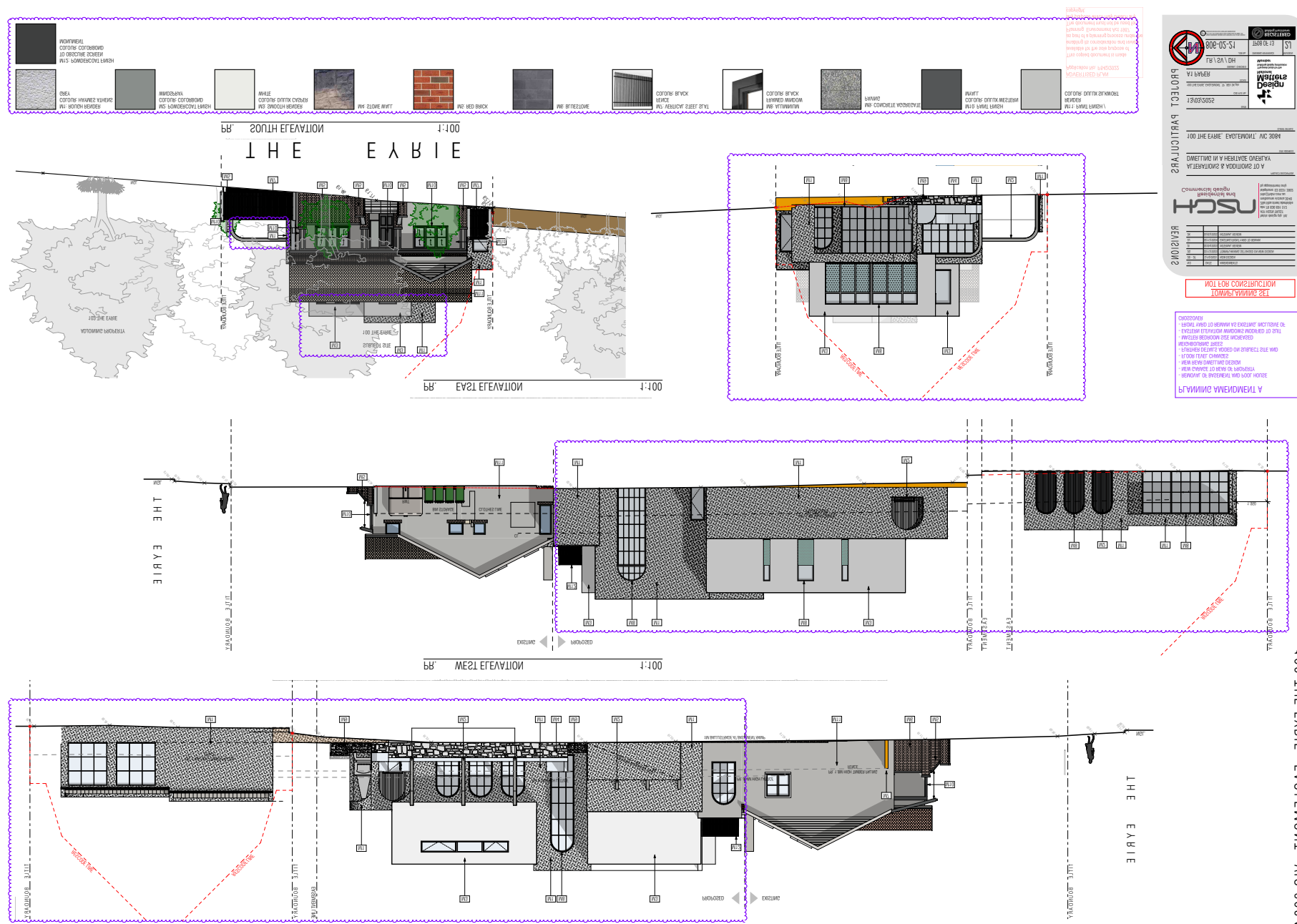




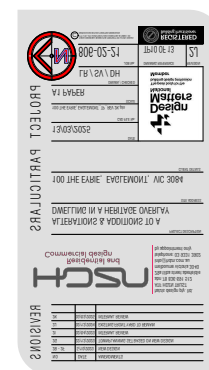
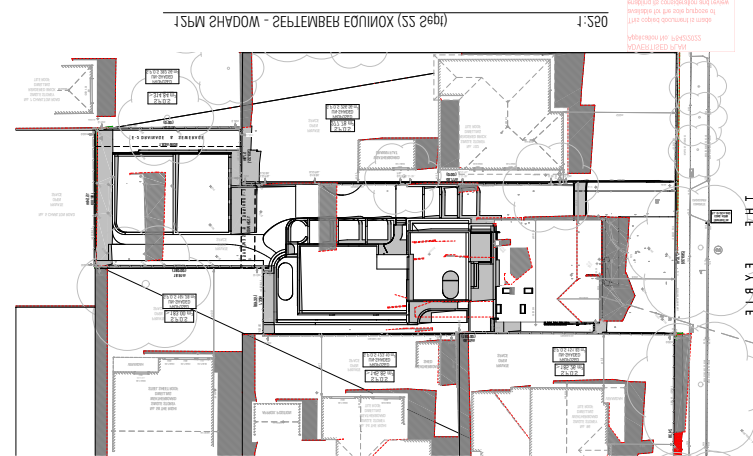








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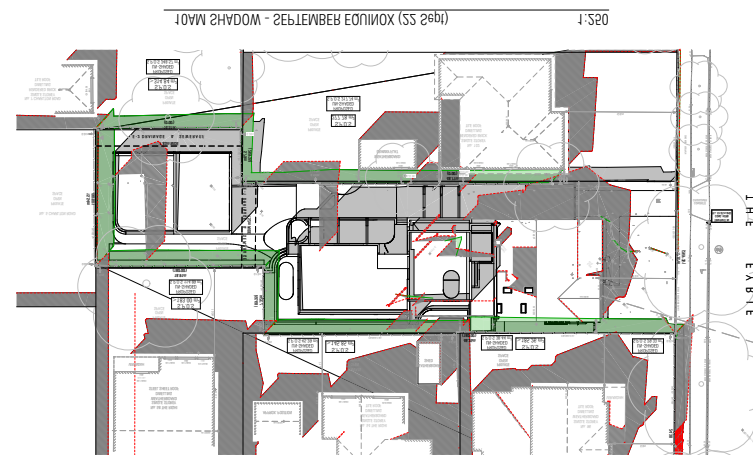
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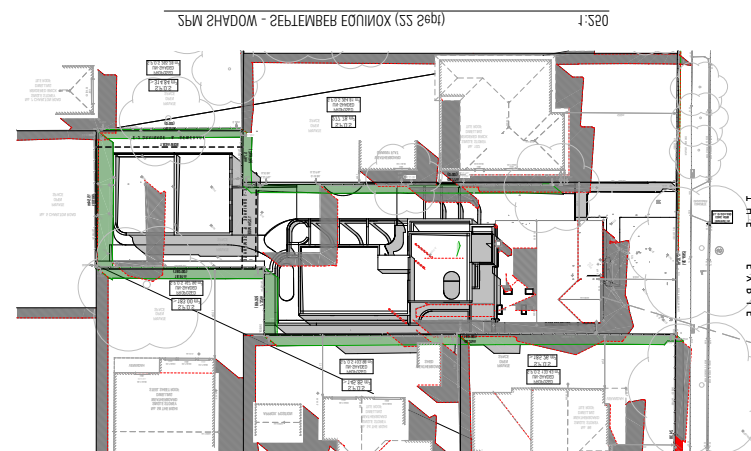
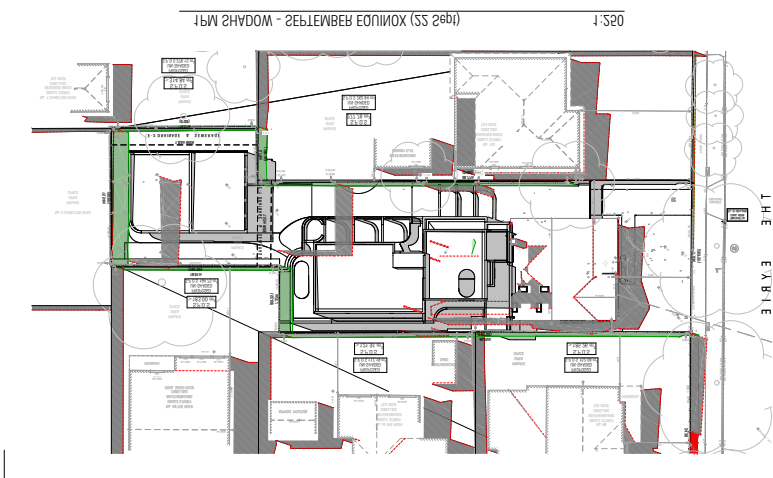
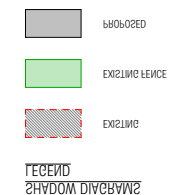
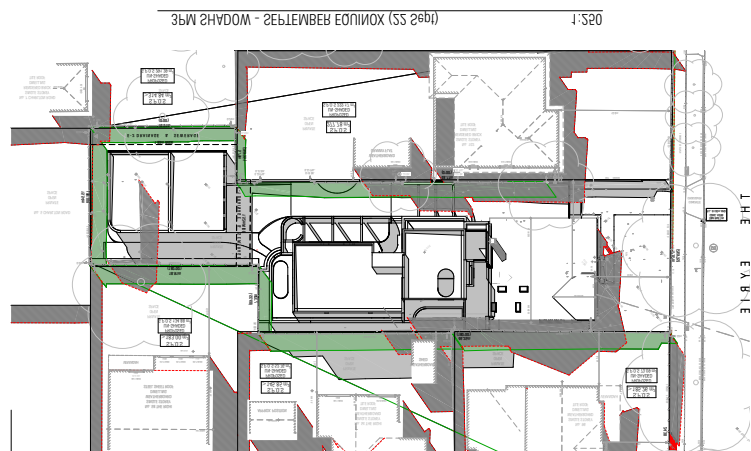
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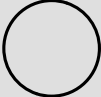
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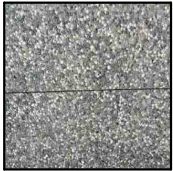

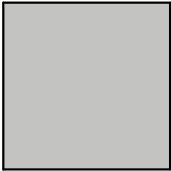

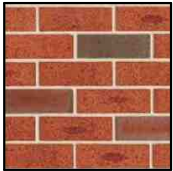




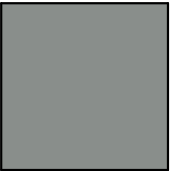




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ENGINEER
No. 123456789
JAMES M. SMITH
10/10/2020

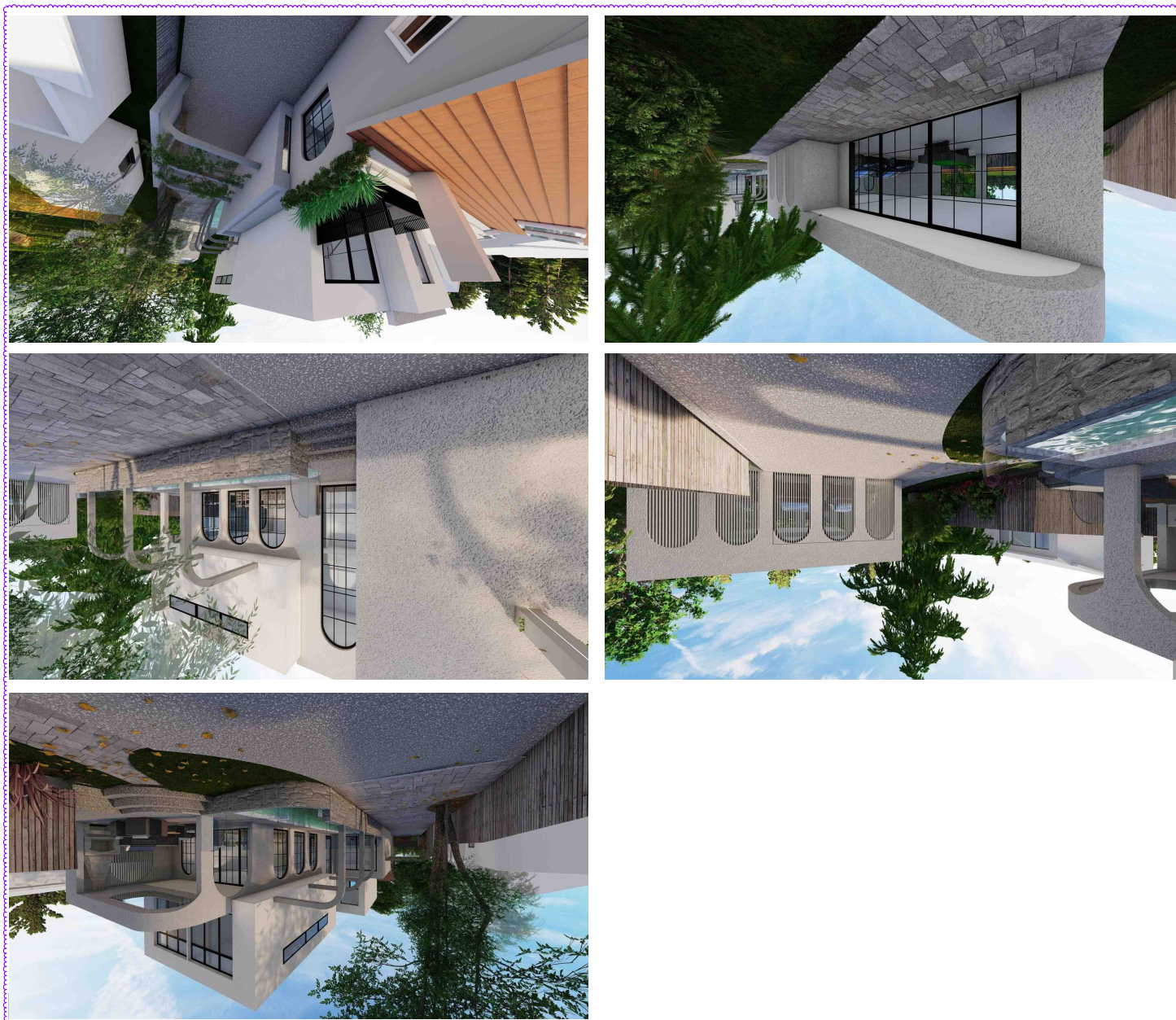
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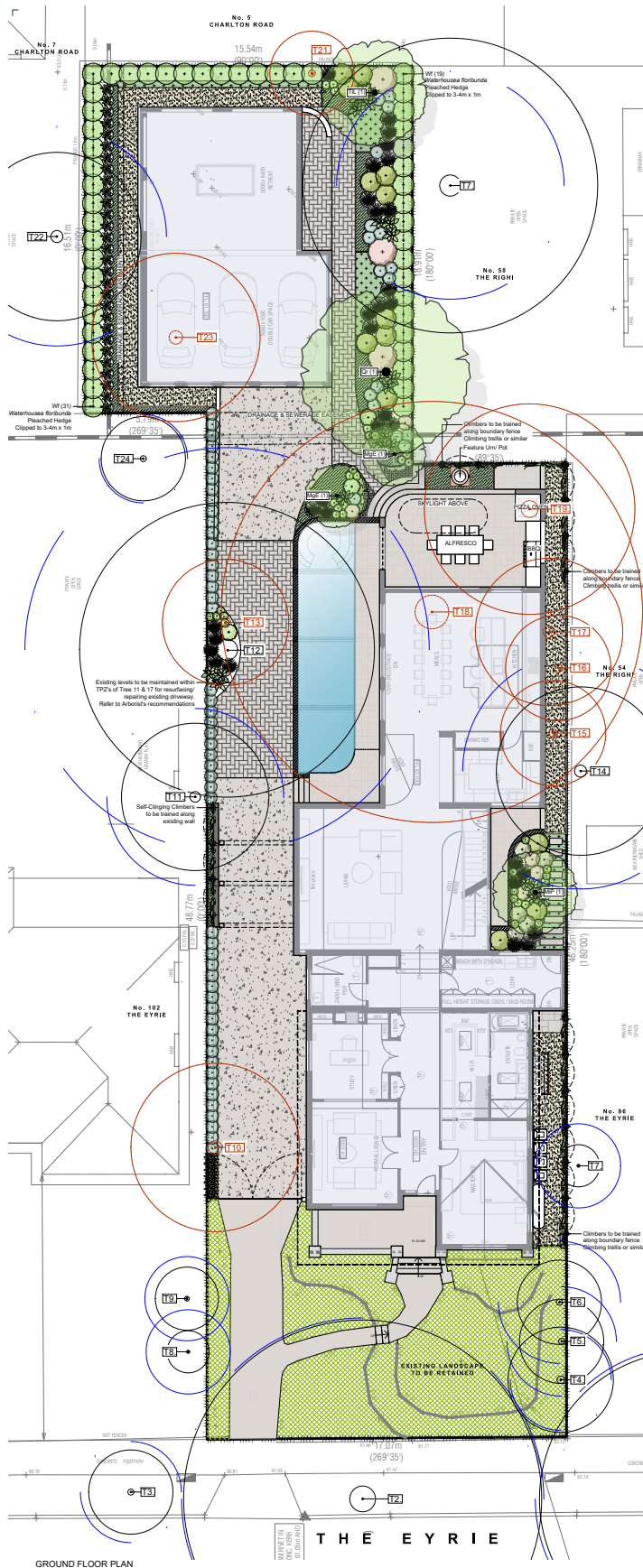
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ADVERTISED PLAN
Application No. P94/2022

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Con & Angela Kouroukidis
PROJECT
Proposed Residence
100 The Eyrie, Eaglemont

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Bell Street Mall Masterplan and Design Guide

Community Consultation Findings March 2025



Executive Summary

The Bell Street Mall Masterplan and Design Guide project, funded by the Federal Government's Housing Support Program, aims to establish a clear and forward-looking vision for the Bell Street Mall area. The project seeks to unlock housing potential while supporting the creation of a vibrant, mixed-use local centre. Bell Street Mall is recognised for its strategic significance within the Northern Innovation and Sustainability Precinct (NISP) and for its unique, multicultural community.

After completing the scoping and background analysis phase from December 2024 to February 2025—which involved gathering existing information, community insights, identifying key issues and opportunities, stage 1 community engagement phase ran from 3 March to 1 April 2025.

To assist discussion, the community were presented with three “Possible Outcomes” for how the land could be used in the Bell Street Mall. All options retained the existing retail core, proposed a new community hub, open space/park, a multi-level parking hub, and land for residential development. The difference between the Possible Outcomes showed different layouts of the land uses.

Stage 1 community engagement included:

- Three community ‘pop-up’ sessions
- Two dedicated drop-in sessions for local non-profit services and traders
- Online surveys
- A painting activity with all students from St Pius X Primary School
- A display at Shop 48, serviced by a project team member, where community members could drop in and learn more about the project.

During the consultation period, **97 online surveys were received**, primarily from residents of Banyule—particularly those living in Heidelberg West, Heidelberg Heights, and Bellfield. **Over 150 individuals** also participated in the face-to-face pop-up and drop-in sessions.

What We Heard from the Community

Community feedback highlighted a strong desire for more green spaces and larger public areas to foster a sense of community—especially as residential development expands. Respondents advocated for kid-friendly amenities, improved safety features, and better access to grocery stores to enhance local convenience.

Parking emerged as a major concern, with calls for more accessible and centralised parking solutions to serve both residents and visitors. While there was broad support for integrating retail and residential spaces, some expressed concerns that high-density housing could dominate the area and overshadow local shops, potentially impacting the mall’s appeal.

Overall, the community expressed strong support for what the project was aiming to achieve: a well-balanced development that meets residential needs while preserving and enhancing vibrant public spaces and essential local services.

Next steps

This marks the first stage of our community engagement process, focusing on three potential outcomes. Based on the feedback we receive from the broader community and key stakeholders, we will develop a draft master plan that includes more detailed options reflecting community preferences. We aim to present this draft master plan for the second round of community engagement, scheduled for August–September.

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Project Overview

Banyule is preparing a new Masterplan and Design Guide for the Bell Street Mall Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC) aimed at enhancing the mall through the integration of well-designed and diverse housing and open community spaces tailored to the local community's needs. This initiative will explore opportunities for both the mall and its surrounding area, establishing a strategic vision, key directions, and a phased funding approach to optimise land use, urban design, public realm, pedestrian and public transport connections, and community infrastructure.

Engagement Objectives

Objective 1	Communicate the project's vision, objectives, and clearly distinguish between negotiable and non-negotiable elements.
Objective 2	Consult the community on the three possible outcomes, identifying preferred features and areas of interest.
Objective 3	To receive feedback from the community on the vision, key directions, objectives and anything we may have missed.

Stages of Engagement

Stage One (March/April) involved community engagement through online surveys, pop-up sessions, and drop-in sessions to explore three potential future outcomes for the Bell Street Mall.

Based on the feedback received in Phase One, a draft Masterplan and Design Guide will be developed.

Stage Two (August/September) will focus on gathering community feedback on the draft documents, which will provide greater detail and respond to areas of uncertainty and concern raised during the first phase.



Summary of Findings

Based on the insights gathered from the community engagement process, the project team has identified the following key focus areas that require further consideration:

Stage 1

- **Increasing green spaces and public open areas:** The community expressed strong interest in having more shared green spaces and parks to improve the communal feel of the area, especially with the proposed increase in residential buildings. Larger public open spaces are preferred over smaller, segmented pocket parks.
- **Enhancing safety and accessibility:** The community would like to see measures implemented to make the area feel safer and more family-friendly, such as better lighting, visibility, and pedestrian-friendly design.
- **Attracting a diverse mix of businesses:** Residents expressed a desire for the revitalised mall to include a variety of shops and services, including grocers, delis, bakeries, and restaurants, to create a more vibrant and self-sufficient neighbourhood hub.
- **Preserving the historical character:** The community values the existing character and heritage of the Bell Street Mall and would like to see elements like the iconic mall sign incorporated into the new design.
- **Providing adequate parking:** Ensuring there is sufficient parking, both for residents and visitors, is a key concern to maintain accessibility and support the commercial viability of the area.
- Community feedback envisions a **central community hub** at Bell Street Mall offering flexible spaces for events, essential services (library, health, childcare, etc.) Success hinges on diverse programs, local partnerships, community involvement, and a welcoming, accessible design connected to green spaces, creating a vibrant neighbourhood focal point.
- **Integrating the design with the surrounding community:** The community emphasised the importance of the new development feeling cohesive and connected to the existing neighbourhood, rather than a standalone project.



Engagement Methods

The engagement process utilised five main methods to gather input from the community and key stakeholders. These engagement methods were promoted with postcards distributed directly to Traders, Shop 48 and the Barrbunin Beek Gathering Place. Flyers were mailed out across Heidelberg West and Bellfield, as well as targeted, social media campaigns.



97 responses to the online survey



150 (estimated) people over three Face-to-face Pop-up sessions



16 at industry and traders at two dedicated Drop-In Sessions



37 St Pius X Primary School Students for Painting Activities



6 Written submissions (Via Email)



9 people have reached out to Shop 48 for more information.

Who we heard from

Survey Demographics

During the consultation period (3 March 2025 – 1 April 2025), Council received a strong response of 97 online surveys from the community, reflecting both enthusiasm and commitment. The results below combine demographic data collected through the online survey engagement.

Gender



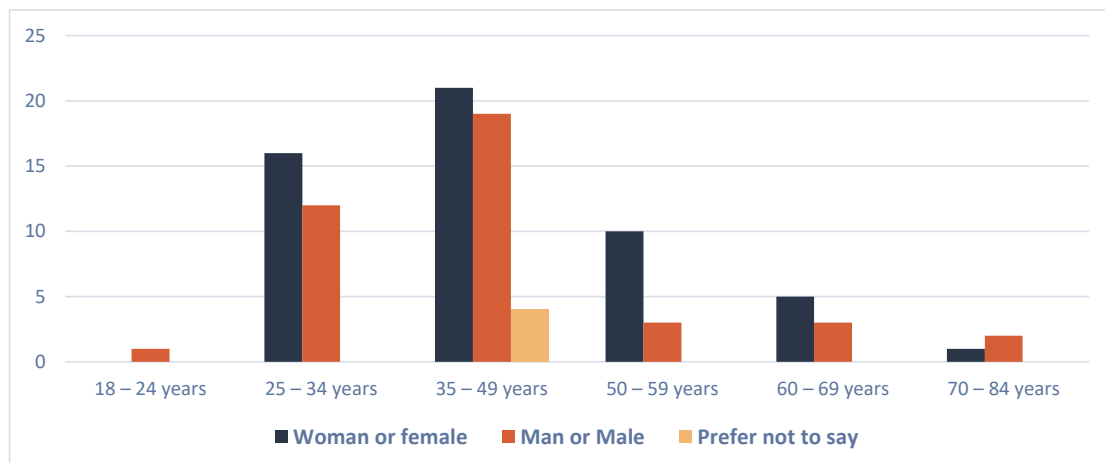
55% woman or female



41% man or male

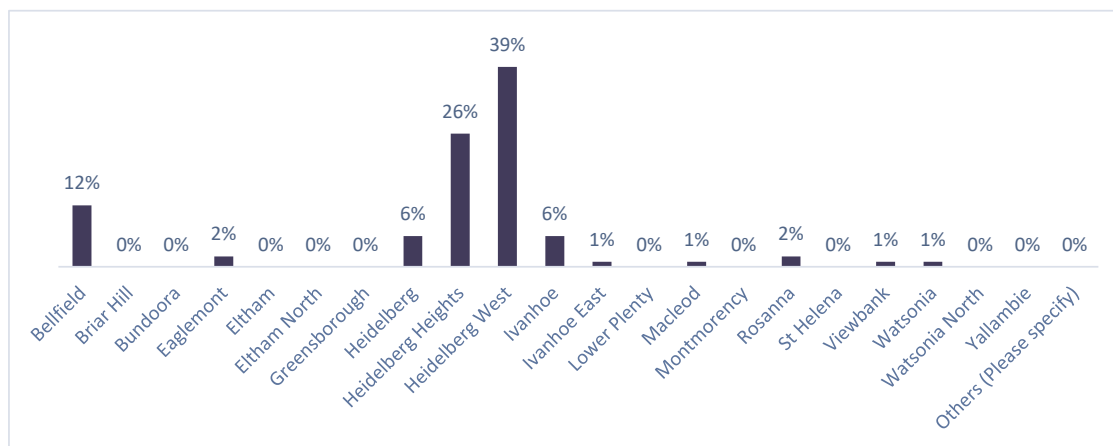
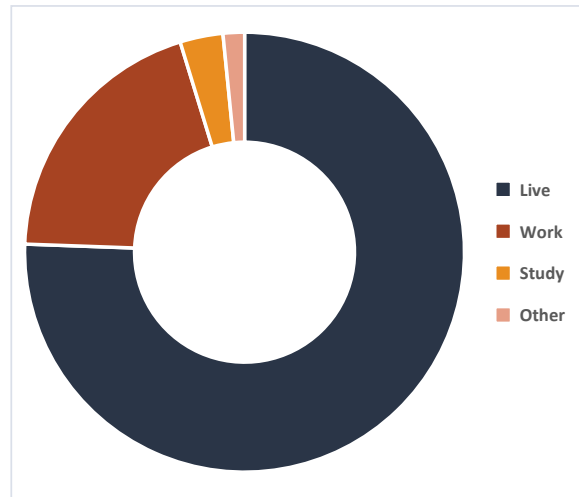
4% prefer not to say

Age groups

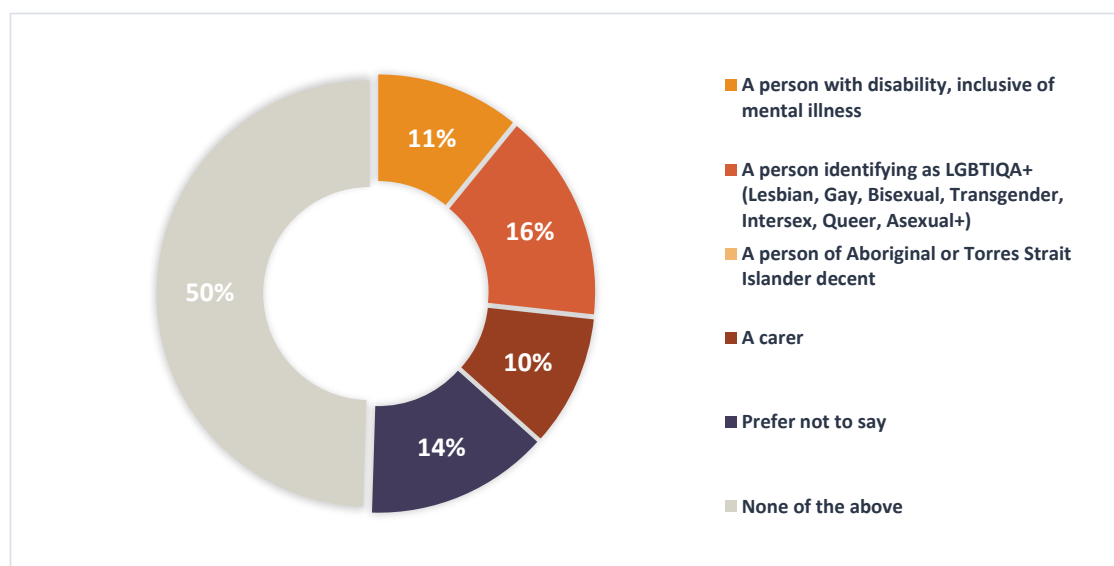


Relationship to Banyule

From the responses the majority of participants are from Heidelberg West (39%), Heidelberg Heights (26%) and Bellfield (12%).



Access and Equity



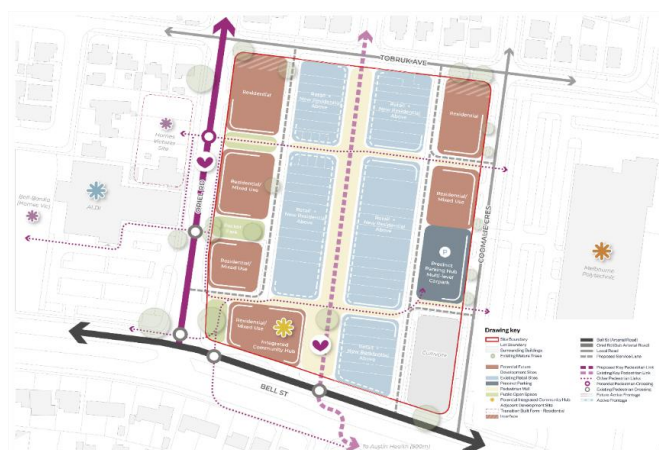
Detailed Findings

Online Surveys

Regarding the online survey, three potential outcomes were presented on the Shaping Banyule webpage. This platform allowed community members to view interactive maps with explanations for each option and provide location-specific feedback. The online survey period ran from March 3rd to April 1st, and we received significant participation, with 96 members contributing valuable comments and suggestions. The main comments pertaining to each option are as follows:

- **Possible outcome 1:**

- Option 1 was **the least favoured** among the three proposals.



🌿 MAIN COMMENTS (THEMES)

1. Not Enough Green/Open Space

- "Pocket parks are too small," "Need more green space," "Combine into one larger park."
- Many felt the green space was "overshadowed by buildings," unattractive, and inadequate for the number of residents.
- Calls for more trees, shaded areas, community gardens, and consolidated open space.
- Requests for nature-focused design responding to climate change.

2. Excessive Residential Development

- Critiques include "too many residential buildings," "overwhelms public space," "feels dark and crowded."
- People are sceptical about the need for more apartments, citing many already vacant in nearby suburbs.
- Concerned that added height will block sunlight, reduce visual openness, and create dense, unpleasant environments.

3. Inadequate Parking

- Strong and repeated concerns: "Where will shoppers/residents/employees park?"
- Loss of existing Bell St and Oriel Rd parking was a major pain point.
- Residents urged for underground or multi-deck parking solutions.
- Some pointed out current parking is already at capacity; fear that adding residential parking would make this worse.

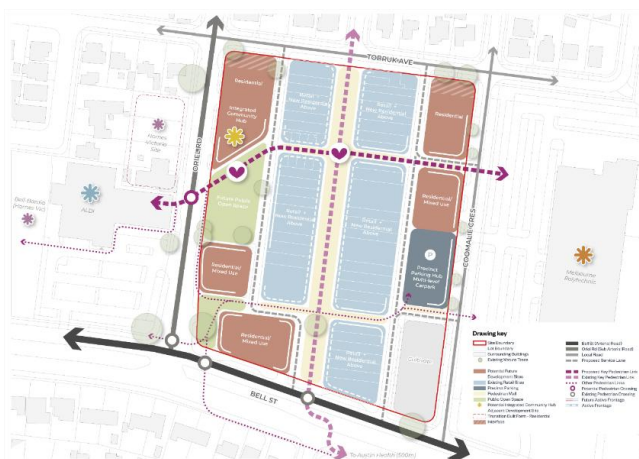
4. Community & Retail Identity Loss

- Concern about losing the social and cultural character of Bell St Mall.
- Fear that redevelopment would displace current services like the Post Office, bakery, and independent shops.
- Several residents called for restoring historic elements (e.g., Mall sign) and keeping existing gathering spots.
- Emphasis on preserving affordable retail, multicultural food options, and casual meeting areas.

- Mixed feedback on the **Community Hub**
- Desire for more thought-out pedestrian routes, better lighting, and safer crossings.
- Calls for libraries, public bathrooms, protected bike lanes, and clearer integration with bus/train connections.

- Fears that dense housing with poor design will worsen existing issues: loitering, drug use, vandalism.
- Specific mention of poor lighting, alley-like pathways, and isolated carparks encouraging crime.
- Recommendations for open visibility, active frontages, and graffiti prevention strategies.

- **Possible outcome 2:**
 - This is the **most favoured** option by far.
 - Community liked the **larger, centralised park, pedestrian experience,** and **community hub integration.**
 - Major issues to resolve **parking, too much housing, long-term maintenance,** and **retaining local retail identity.**



- Widely praised as the **best** aspect of this option.
- "Great idea to have large green space next to community hub"; "Feels open, practical, and inviting."
- Seen as ideal for families, events and relaxed community gatherings.
- Preference for usable open space vs small pocket parks: "This feels like a real park."

2. Strong Support for Community Hub Location

- Highly favoured placing the hub **next to** the park and **away** from Bell Street.
- Encourages better visibility and access without being exposed to traffic noise and pollution.
- Suggested to include a **library**, garden, and flexible event space.
- Important for some that it connects with outdoor activities and cafes.

3. Parking Still a Major Concern

- Despite preference for this design, parking is **still seen as inadequate**.
- Repeated questions: "Where will shoppers, residents, staff park?"
- Requests for **short-term parking, accessible parking, and EV charging**.
- Suggestions to move parking closer to shops or put it **underground**.

4. Balance of Residential vs. Retail

- General concern over **too much residential** again.
- Residents want more shops that **serve locals**, not just apartment dwellers.
- Clear support for mixed-use buildings with retail below and homes above—**only if** it maintains visibility and walkability.

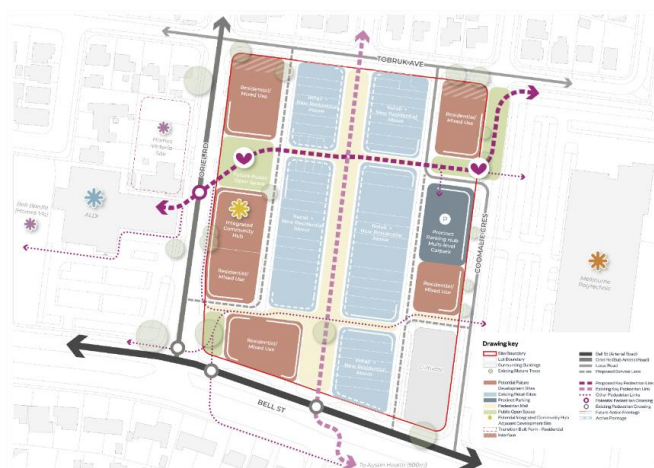
5. Urban Design & Connectivity

- Support for better pedestrian movement and flow through Mall.
- Suggestions for **bike lanes**, **better crossings**, and **nature strips**.
- Residents emphasised **design aesthetics**: natural colours, fewer “childish bright colours,” tree-lined walkways.

6. Anti-Social Behaviour Still a Worry (But Less So)

- Concerns less intense than Option 1, thanks to openness and visibility.
- Residents noted that “dark narrow spaces” invite trouble, but a well-designed park with visibility can reduce this.
- Advocated for lighting plans, seating, and active public presence.

- **Possible outcome 3:**
 - Viewed as a **decent compromise** but generally ranked **#2 or #3** behind Option 2.
 - Liked for its **walkability, residential integration, and less imposing feel.**
 - Main critiques: **small green spaces, inconvenient parking, hidden hub,** and ongoing **safety concerns.**



MAIN COMMENTS (THEMES)

1. Mixed Feedback on Green Spaces

- Praised for **having more green areas than Option 1**, but many said: “still not as good as Option 2.”
- Distributed parks seen as **less usable**: “too small for gatherings, sports, or relaxing.”
- One resident said it felt like “greenery scattered at the edges, not a central destination.”
- Suggestions to consolidate green spaces into **one or two larger ones**.

2. Moderate Support for Community Hub Location

- Located more toward the **centre/back**, which some liked for being **quiet and central**.
- Others worried it was **too hidden**: "Might get missed," "Better when visible from Bell Street."
- General consensus: placement is okay but **not ideal** compared to Option 2.

3. Parking Still an Unresolved Issue

- One of the most repeated complaints again: "Where will everyone park?"
- Many fear the **single carpark is too far**, isolated, and prone to anti-social behaviour.
- Desire for **multiple access points, short-term spots, and separated parking for residents vs. shoppers**.

4. Residential Integration Seen as More Balanced

- Option 3 is seen as a **"middle ground"** between the overdevelopment of Option 1 and concentration in Option 2.
- More **walkable**, maintains better **retail-residential flow**, and has **some charm**.
- However, many still expressed concerns about the **overall volume of new apartments**.



5. Anti-Social Behaviour and Safety Concerns Persist

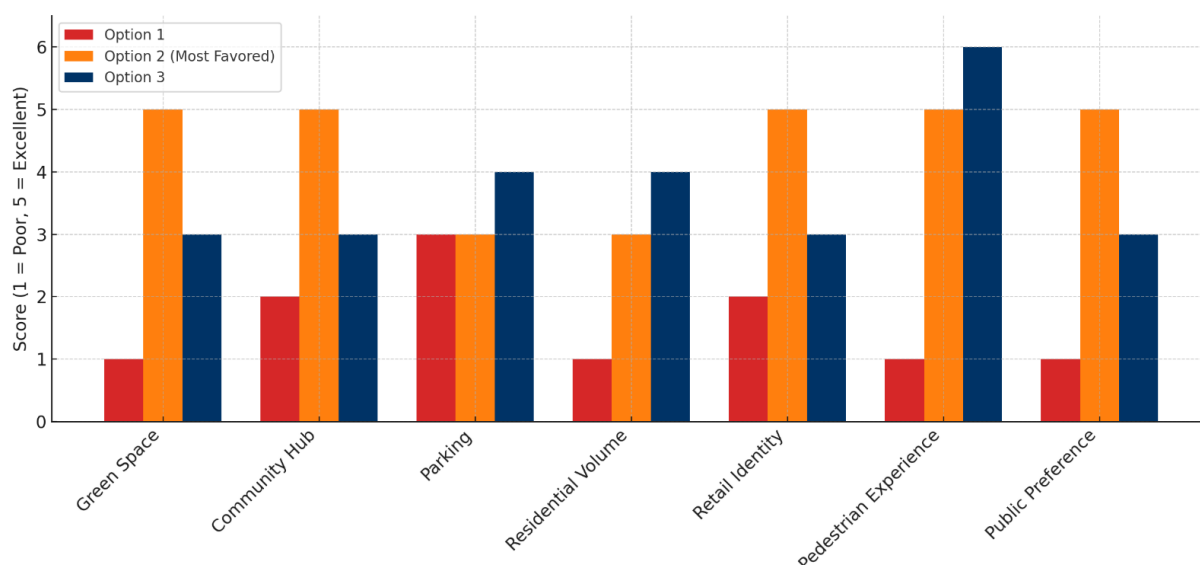
- Still a worry due to **isolated green pockets, alleys, and residential "walls"** that might create blind spots.
- Multiple comments about loitering, poor lighting, and "unsafe corners."
- Suggestions to ensure lighting, windows overlooking spaces, and active shopfronts.

6. Design and Flow Feedback

- Some liked the **pedestrian routes and laneway feel**, calling it "inviting" and "village-like."
- Concerns about **awkward road bends** causing congestion.
- Requests for stronger **cohesion between buildings, urban canopy, and safer bike/pedestrian paths**.
- Encouragement to keep **mid-century shopfront charm**.

QUICK COMPARISON:

Feature	Option 1 	Option 2  (Most Favoured)	Option 3 
Green Space	Minimal, scattered pocket parks	Large central park, well-liked	Small, distributed parks
Community Hub	On Bell Street (less preferred)	Near central park (most liked)	Central but hidden
Parking	Very inadequate, poorly placed	Poor access, isolate	Better but still lacking
Residential Volume	Too much, overwhelming	Still too much, but better flow	Better balance
Retail Identity	Overshadowed by apartments	Preserved and activated	Balanced, but concern remains
Pedestrian Experience	Maze-like, unsafe	Decent flow, some congestion	Open, Walkable
Public Preference	Least preferred	Most preferred	Mid-tier/compromise



Face-to-face Pop-up sessions

As part of our engagement activities, we scheduled four face-to-face pop-up sessions. One session at Malahang Park was cancelled due to weather conditions. The remaining sessions were attended by **three Banyule staff** from the Strategic Planning and Urban Design team and included:

- **Wednesday, 19 March** at Bell Street Mall (near Shop 48), from **10:00 AM to 12:00 PM**.
- **Saturday, 21 March** at Bell Street Mall (near ALDI), from **9:30 AM to 11:00 AM**. Held on a weekend in a high-traffic location, it attracted a **diverse group of participants** from across Heidelberg West and Bellfield.
- **Friday, 28 March** at Bell Street Mall (near Shop 48), from **12:00 PM to 2:00 PM**.

The main comments pertaining to each option are as follows:

● Option 1 – Least Preferred

Overall Sentiment:

The majority of participants viewed Option 1 negatively.

Key Concerns:

- **Overdevelopment:** Concerns about high-rise buildings overshadowing the mall, blocking sunlight, and harming the area's identity.
- **Loss of character:** Worry that the plan erases the Mall's charm and social spaces.
- **Fragmented green space:** Pocket parks seen as unsafe, too small, or poorly located.
- **Parking issues:** Strong concerns about insufficient and inconvenient parking access.
- **Safety and access:** Comments on the need for better lighting, security, footpaths, and clearer visibility to and from the street.

Positive Mentions:

- Interest in features like **op-shops, water fountains, police presence, multicultural celebration**, and **sustainable design**.

● Option 2 – Most Preferred

Overall Sentiment:

Option 2 received strong support across all sessions and was widely seen as the most balanced and community-focused design.

Key Strengths:

- **Large central park:** Appreciated for its usability, family-friendliness, and visual appeal.
- **Hub integration:** Placing the community hub next to the open space was viewed positively, allowing for community events, workshops, and gatherings.
- **Cultural vibrancy:** Calls for murals, Aboriginal and Somalian art, outdoor movie nights, food stalls, and space for events.
- **Accessible movement:** Participants liked the ease of movement between Aldi, the park, and cafes.
- **Support for essential services:** Requests included a **library, toilets, medical facilities, and better lighting.**

Areas to Improve:

- Some raised concerns about **blind spots** and **safety at night**, especially near residential areas.
- Parking access remains an issue, though seen as better than in Option 1.

● Option 3 – Mixed Reactions (Middle Ground)
Overall Sentiment:

Option 3 was viewed as more balanced than Option 1 but less favoured than Option 2.

Positive Aspects:

- **Distributed green spaces** and a calmer, residential feel.
- **More public housing** and interest in integrating social service
- **Support for rooftop/community gardens** and small parklets throughout the area.
- **More welcoming to local businesses** and calls to retain key retailers and add services like **ice cream shops, late-night dining, and organic food options.**

Concerns Raised:

- Green spaces felt **too small or disconnected** compared to Option 2's central park.
- **Parking still seen as inadequate**, and concerns over traffic and safety.
- Worries about **gentrification** and pushing out existing communities.

Drop-In sessions

To gain deeper insights into the specific needs and perspectives of non-profit service providers and traders at the Bell Street Mall, two dedicated drop-in sessions were held on **Thursday, 28 March** at **Shop 48 – Harmony Centre**. The sessions took place from **10:00 AM to 12:00 PM** and **4:00 PM to 6:00 PM**.

Valuable feedback and insights were gathered through these conversations. The main themes that emerged include:

🚗 Parking and Accessibility

- Strong concerns around **number and type of parking spots**, especially:
 - **Short-term commercial parking**
 - **Needing to maintain accessible parking** near community services and close to medical centre/pharmacy
 - **30-minute parking** for visitors

- Safety issues with **after-hours parking access**—participants noted it is not safe to walk to the mall from existing car parks at night.
- **Reallocation of parking** is requested, along with better proximity to services.

Safety and Security

- High priority on **lighting improvements**, especially for evenings.
- Requests for **CCTV**, **police station presence**, and even **mall gates** to improve night-time safety.
- Safety concerns linked to **rough sleeping**, with suggestions for:
 - **Lockers for personal belongings**
 - **Shower facilities**
 - **Dedicated crisis accommodation access**

Housing Needs

- Emphasis on **larger homes** for families (especially Somali households).
- Support for **different housing models**
- Preference for **low-rise (2–3 stories)** near the frontage to avoid blocking visibility and access.

Community Hub & Services

- Broad support for a **multi-purpose community hub** integrated with open space.
- Importance of **separating sensitive services** (e.g., homelessness) from public-facing activities to reduce stigma. This was extended to potentially having more than one community hub.
- Preference for:
 - **Single-story community buildings** near the mall entrance
 - **Standalone hub building**, but still connected to retail
 - **Co-designed** hub layout reflecting user needs
 - **Shared lobbies** and flexible spaces for a range of users (e.g., families, service providers)

Open Space & Activation

- Strong support for **large, accessible open spaces** near the community hub.
- Interest in features such as:
 - **Kiosks** or **social enterprise cafes**
 - **Vegetable gardens** in car park areas
 - **Outdoor gyms and children's gardens**
 - **Cultural gathering spaces** and events
- Concern that too much high-rise development would reduce usable public space and community feel.

Cultural Identity & Inclusion

- Desire for **public art**, including **Aboriginal and Somalian murals**.

- Requests for **multi-faith prayer rooms** and **inclusive indoor lobbies**.
- Suggestions for **improved music selection** in the mall to reflect its cultural diversity.

St. Pius X Primary School Painting Activity

As part of the ongoing community engagement for the Bell Street Mall redevelopment project, a creative painting activity was conducted with full age range from **St. Pius X Primary School**. The session aimed to capture the ideas, imagination, and preferences of children who frequent the area with their families. Students participated in a hands-on art activity and responded to two key questions through drawing and painting:

Question 1: "At Bell Street Mall, I would like to see more..."

Children expressed a strong desire for the Mall to be a fun, social, and family-friendly place. The most frequently mentioned ideas included:

- **Shops & Food Outlets:** Donut and toy shops, ice-cream and chocolate stores, bakeries, restaurants (including multicultural food like Chinese, pizza, and tacos), and KFC.
- **Public Amenities & Gathering Spaces:** Libraries, picnic areas, BBQ spaces, public seating, lights, and water fountains.
- **Greenery & Relaxation:** Trees, flower gardens (especially roses), and shaded areas.
- **Play & Entertainment:** Playgrounds, bike paths, movie theatre, music, and group spaces for families and friends to gather.

Question 2: "At the Parking Precinct, I would like to see more..."

Children reimagined the parking area as a highly active and playful space. Key suggestions included:

- **Play Infrastructure:** Long slides, swings, monkey bars, cubby houses, bridges, and outdoor games.
- **Sport & Recreation:** Footy fields, skateparks, scooter tracks, and a swimming pool.
- **Creative & Quiet Zones:** Arts and crafts spaces, LEGO areas.
- **Natural Features:** Real grass, flowers, and water drinking taps.
- **Basic Amenities:** Bathrooms and shaded rest areas.

These responses reflect a clear **wish for a welcoming, safe, and vibrant environment that supports both social activities and everyday amenities**, while also highlighting the children's desire to transform underutilised spaces into **vibrant, multi-purpose play and recreation zones**.



Direct email submissions from local residents and stakeholders

The email feedback reflects a high level of community interest in the future of Bell Street Mall. Residents generally welcomed the idea of revitalisation but expressed a broad range of opinions regarding the direction, scale, and approach of the proposed Masterplan. Many were eager to preserve the area's unique identity, affordability, and local business culture.

A. Support for Revitalisation – with Conditions

Many residents supported improving the Bell Street Mall, noting its potential to uplift the surrounding area. Concerns included over-commercialisation and a fear of losing what makes the Mall distinct.

“It could really rejuvenate the area if done well.”

B. Height and Density Concerns

Numerous emails voiced strong opposition to high-rise developments (particularly buildings of 6–8 stories), with residents advocating for limits of 2–3 stories in areas close to green space. Concerns included:

- Overshadowing of public spaces
- Visual impact and urban character loss
- Increased congestion and infrastructure strain

“High-rise housing is overwhelming and doesn't suit the area.”

“Taller buildings should be along Bell Street only.”

C. Parking and Traffic

Residents emphasised the need to retain and improve parking. Concerns were raised about reducing car spaces around the mall, and suggestions were made for better traffic management and parking access:

- Retain parking on Coomalie Crescent, with potential for a modest multi-level structure
- Improve signal timing at key intersections
- Install raised pedestrian crossings and speed reduction measures

“We need around 400 car spaces for a revitalised Mall.”

“Traffic turning onto Oriol Road is a problem and should be reconfigured.”

D. Retail and Economic Activity

Feedback focused on both attracting major tenants and retaining existing small retailers. Suggestions included:

- Bringing in anchor tenants (e.g. supermarkets, entertainment venues)
- Surveying retailers to understand preferred shop formats
- Preserving well-loved businesses like IGA, the post office, and local grocers

“A mix of national tenants and family-run stores could work well.”

“Some effort should go into retaining key existing businesses.”

E. Public Amenity and Infrastructure

Residents called for improved and expanded public infrastructure to support both the current population and potential growth, such as:

- A public library or quiet study/workspaces
- More green space, gardens, and shaded areas
- Playgrounds and splash parks for families
- Rooftop gardens and multifunctional community hubs

"A third-space with Wi-Fi and views over green space would be a huge benefit."

"We're under-resourced—no library, few parks, and poor transport."

F. Cleanliness, Graffiti, and Visual Appeal

Multiple submissions noted that the Mall's current appearance detracts from its potential. Suggestions included:

- Painting and refreshing building façades
- Addressing litter with volunteer patrols and cleanup programs
- Developing a system for frequent graffiti removal

"The Mall looks dull from Bell and Oriel—maybe murals or fresh paint?"

"Graffiti and litter are ongoing problems that need coordinated action."

Conclusion of Phase One Community Engagement

The first phase of community engagement for the **Bell Street Mall Masterplan and Design Guide** has been a deeply collaborative and insightful process. Through a diverse range of engagement activities—including online surveys, pop-up sessions, drop-in discussions, creative workshops with schoolchildren, and ongoing conversations at Shop 48—residents, traders, non-profit services, and local stakeholders shared their priorities, values, and visions for the future of the Mall precinct.

Across all engagement formats, participants expressed a clear desire for a masterplan that balances **green space, vibrant community facilities, safety, and affordable housing**, while preserving the **Mall's unique cultural identity**. The feedback also highlighted the need for **functional and well-integrated parking**, a **cohesive pedestrian experience**, and greater clarity around the proposed **community hub and housing types**.

Based on these rich insights, Banyule City Council and its design and planning consultant, **Mesh**, will collaboratively refine the concept designs into an **optimised plan** for the next stage of the project. This upcoming phase will address areas where the community requested:

- **Further clarification and transparency**, especially around parking, housing types, and the role of the community hub.
- **More detailed design work**, including layout, service integration, and traffic circulation
- **Three-dimensional visual modelling**, to better communicate the spatial and architectural vision

This next stage will present a **draft Masterplan and Design Guide** that reflects the community's aspirations while responding to key feedback with actionable design improvements.



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How to use these supporting templates and resources

These templates are designed to support your work in Section 3 of the [Gender impact assessment toolkit](#) ('the toolkit').

There is a template aligned to each of the 4 steps involved in conducting a gender impact assessment. Each template provides a useful record for reporting and can assist with demonstrating your compliance with the Gender Equality Act.

These templates are also available to download on the [Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector](#) website.

The use of inclusive language in this document

When this document refers to 'woman/ women' or 'man/men' it refers to female or male identifying people; this includes transgender people, cisgender people, and others who identify themselves within the spectrum of the gender identity of woman or man. This document also uses the term 'gender diverse people', who may identify as non-binary, trans, agender, qenderqueer, genderfluid or with any other term. For more information see the [Victorian Government Inclusive Language Guide](#).



Template 1: Define the issues and challenge assumptions

This template is designed to support your analysis for Step 1 of the gender impact assessment process. You can read more on pages 18 to 20 of the toolkit.

A. What issue is the policy, program or service trying to address?

See page 18 of the toolkit. Think about why this policy, program or service is needed.

1. **Housing and Urban Density:** The project aims to unlock housing potential in the Bell Street Mall area, addressing the need for well-designed, higher-density housing. This is crucial given the projected population growth in the West Precinct (32.6% increase by 2041), which necessitates a strategic approach to urban planning. Social and affordable housing forms an important part of the history of Bell Street mall, and it will continue to be an integral part of the discussion about housing in the area.
2. **Community Safety:** Safety concerns are prevalent, especially for women and gender diverse individuals. With only 48% of women feeling safe walking in their local area at night, the plan aims to improve safety measures and public spaces to create a more secure environment for all residents.
3. **Economic Viability and Support for Local Businesses:** The revitalization of Bell Street Mall is intended to enhance local commerce, particularly benefiting immigrant and minority communities that rely on the mall for economic activity. This includes supporting women-owned and culturally specific businesses, fostering a vibrant and inclusive local economy.
4. **Social Inclusion and Participation:** The project emphasizes the importance of engaging the community, especially marginalized groups, in the decision-making process. This is vital for ensuring that the Masterplan reflects the diverse needs and aspirations of all community members, including First Nations peoples, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and single parents.
5. **Addressing Gender Inequality:** In compliance with the Gender Equality Act 2020, the project will conduct a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) to identify and mitigate potential gender inequalities. This involves examining how different genders access services and resources, as well as ensuring equitable participation in the development process.

B. Key questions

See page 19 of the toolkit – summarise the key points of your discussion for each question. Remember this is an opportunity to critically analyse the issue. If you feel you need more information to answer the question, note this down and you can come back to this in Step 2.

1. Are the people who are targeted and impacted by the policy, program or service included in the decision-making?

In the context of the Bell Street Mall Neighbourhood Activity Centre (Bell Street Mall) project, it is essential that **the voices of the diverse community members who will be affected by the Masterplan and Design Guide are actively included in the decision-making process.**

Given that the Bell Street Mall serves as a vital hub for various communities, including significant immigrant populations, particularly the Somali community, it is crucial to ensure that these groups are represented. This can be achieved through:

- **Community Engagement:** In the process of developing the master plan for Bell Street Mall, we have two main community engagement stages. These will involve conducting workshops, public forums, and surveys to gather insights from residents about their needs, aspirations, and concerns regarding



the redevelopment. Special attention should be given to including women, gender-diverse individuals, and other underrepresented groups in these discussions.

- **Collaborative Planning:** Involving local businesses and community organizations in the planning process can help ensure that the solutions developed are reflective of the community's needs and that their interests are considered.

- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establishing mechanisms for ongoing feedback allows community members to express their views throughout the planning and implementation phases. This could include regular updates and opportunities for input as the project progresses.

Is more information needed? Yes ☐ No ☒

2. Do you think that people of different genders access this policy, program or service at the same rate?

51% of the population in the City of Banyule identify as female. However just 27% of Females are in Full-time employment, compared to 47% of Males in the city of Banyule. And on the other hand, 48% of women Said they felt safe walking in their local area at night, compared to 75% of Men. And also a higher proportion of females say they don't participate in any form of physical activity (33%, compared to 27% males) Based on available data from the Banyule demographic analysis, it can be observed that women, men, and gender-diverse individuals do not access the services and opportunities provided by the Bell Street Mall and its associated policies at the same rates. Women face significant barriers related to employment, safety, and economic equity, and access to the mall which can hinder their engagement with the NAC.

Is more information needed? Yes ☐ No ☒

3. Do you think that everyone who accesses this policy, program or service has the same needs from it?

Think through in a practical sense how people of different genders might benefit from this.

Not everyone accessing the Bell Street Mall has the same needs; for instance, women may prioritise safety and require childcare services, while men might focus on job training and social spaces. Gender-diverse individuals need inclusive resources and representation in decision-making. Additionally, immigrant communities require culturally sensitive services (e.g. facilities for washing feet for prayer), and low-income families need access to affordable housing and basic support. Recognising these diverse needs is essential for creating effective and inclusive policies that benefit all community members at the Bell Street Mall.

Is more information needed? Yes ☐ No ☒

4. Do the different social roles and responsibilities that people take on affect the way people access and use this policy, program or service?

Yes, different social roles and responsibilities significantly affect how people access and use the services at the Bell Street Mall Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC).

For instance, **women**, often primary caregivers, may have limited time to shop or engage with services due to childcare duties, necessitating convenient access and family-friendly amenities.

Gender-diverse individuals might face unique challenges related to societal expectations and discrimination, impacting their comfort and willingness to access certain services.



Additionally, cultural responsibilities, especially within immigrant communities, can influence engagement levels, as individuals may prioritise services that align with their cultural practices and needs. Overall, these varying social roles shape how different groups interact with the NAC, highlighting the need for tailored services that accommodate diverse responsibilities.

Is more information needed? Yes ☐ No ☒

5. What additional needs might there be for people with disabilities, or from different cultural identities, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations or religions?

People with disabilities and those from diverse cultural identities, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations, or religions may have several additional needs when accessing the Bell Street Mall Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC):

1. Accessibility: Individuals with disabilities may require accessible facilities, including ramps, elevators, and designated parking, as well as clear signage and assistance for navigating the space. For example, some of the humps in the mall need to be removed to improve accessibility and safety.

2. Cultural Sensitivity: Services should be culturally appropriate, offering food options, community events, and programming that reflect the diverse backgrounds of residents, particularly immigrant communities. One of the main issues in the mall is the lack of cultural facilities, such as spaces for prayer and preparation for it. Additionally, it is important to be mindful of various cultural requirements without alienating other diverse users in the mall.

3. Inclusive Healthcare: Access to health services that understand and address specific needs related to gender identity and sexual orientation is crucial, ensuring LGBTQIA+ individuals feel safe and supported.

4. Age-Friendly Services: Different age groups, from children to seniors, require tailored services such as safe play areas for children, social activities for seniors, and resources for young adults.

5. Mental Health Support: Targeted programs addressing mental health challenges, particularly for marginalised groups, can provide essential support and resources. (Information provided in BANSIC report).

Addressing these additional needs will promote a more equitable and welcoming environment for all community members at the NAC.

Is more information needed? Yes ☐ No ☒

C. What will you focus on in your assessment so that you consider how gender shapes the issue?

When assessing how gender shapes the issues faced in the mall, several key aspects should be considered:

1. Access to Facilities

- **Toilets:** The lack of sufficient and accessible public restrooms, particularly gender-neutral options, impacts women and non-binary individuals disproportionately. Women often face longer wait times, which can deter them from using the mall.
- **Family Facilities:** The absence of nappy changing and feeding areas can discourage mothers from visiting, affecting their comfort and willingness to spend time in the mall.



2. Safety and Perception

- **Intimidation:** The predominance of males in certain areas, especially around certain shops and during specific times, can create an intimidating environment for women and children, impacting their sense of safety and willingness to visit.
- **Public Transport Safety:** Concerns regarding safety, particularly for women traveling alone during early or late hours, can limit their mobility and access to the mall.

3. Social Dynamics

- **Community Engagement:** The perception of community neglect may resonate differently across genders. Women, especially from diverse cultural backgrounds, might feel marginalized or ignored in the mall's social landscape.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Understanding the cultural dynamics and how different groups interact can highlight gender-specific needs. For instance, spaces for prayer and family gatherings are essential for many women, especially in Muslim communities.

4. Public Space Utilization

- **Seating and Gathering Areas:** The lack of suitable seating arrangements affects how families, particularly women with children, use the space. Comfortable, safe areas for socializing are crucial for community building.
- **Activities and Events:** Engaging activities that cater to diverse gender interests can enhance foot traffic and create a more inclusive environment.

5. Health Services

- **Mental Health:** The need for mental health services is critical, particularly for women who may face unique stressors. Accessibility to these services can significantly impact their well-being.

6. Community Representation

- **Diverse Voices:** Actively including women's perspectives in decision-making processes regarding mall operations and community services ensures that their needs are met, fostering a more inclusive atmosphere.



Template 2: Understand the policy context.

This template is designed to support Step 2 in the gender impact assessment process and should be used in conjunction with pages 22 to 28 of the toolkit.

1. What information is available to understand who is likely to be affected by the policy, program or service? List available information.

City of Banyule - Total females	2021			2016			Change
	Number*	%*	City of Banyule - Total population %*	Number*	%*	City of Banyule - Total population %*	2016 to 2021*
Households by type							
Couples with children	31,473	49.8	51.9	30,380	50.2	52.4	+1,093
Couples without children	12,813	20.3	20.8	11,649	19.3	19.8	+1,164
One parent families	7,667	12.1	10.7	7,545	12.5	10.9	+122
Other families	589	0.9	1.0	712	1.2	1.2	-123
Group household	1,620	2.6	3.0	1,522	2.5	2.9	+98
Lone person	7,549	12.0	10.2	6,665	11.0	9.5	+884
Visitor only / Other non classifiable households	1,449	2.3	2.4	2,034	3.4	3.3	-585
Total persons counted in private dwellings	63,160	100.0	100.0	60,507	100.0	100.0	+2,653

1. Compared to Women in Greater Melbourne, **Banyule has a higher percentage of woman in the older age groups and has a Lower percentage of women in the working age group 20-39 years.**
2. While homelessness rates and numbers for men have decreased, **women, on the other hand, experienced an increase in both estimated numbers and rates of homelessness at the 2021 Census.**
3. **Banyule has a higher percentage of women than men in need assistance.** And in Banyule, the **west precinct has the highest % of residents in need of assistance (7.6%).**
4. Banyule has a higher % of women with one or more long-term Health conditions in the 15+ age groups. That in comparison with greater Melbourne, **Banyule has a higher % of women with one or more long-term health condition.**
5. First Nations populations witnessed a 6% rise in experiences of homelessness, and **First Nations women constituted nearly 23% of all women experiencing homelessness in 2021.**
6. **Heidelberg West/ Bellfield (5.5%) have the higher proportion of single parent households with dependent children.**
7. Analysis of household/family types of females in the Banyule shows that there was a **lower population of females in couple families with children as well as a higher proportion in comparison to the one-parent families.**
8. Overall, **49.8% of females were in couple families with child(ren).** And **12.1% were one-parent families, compared with 51.9% and 10.7% respectively for city of Banyule total population.**
9. **Women single parents experiencing homelessness outnumbered their male counterparts in every state.**

❖ References:

- Demographic Data
- Community Surveys
- Gender Equality Reports
- Health and Wellbeing Data
- Crime Statistics
- Cultural Diversity Insights
- Economic Reports
- Accessibility Assessments



- Carer Demographics
- Community Health Data
- Urban Design Principals

Do you already have this information? If yes, list sources.

☒ Yes ☐ No

1. Local population statistics (age, gender, cultural background) - Australian Bureau of Statistics website
2. Banyule City Council Community Demographics
3. Community Data Page
4. Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025
5. Victorian Women's Health Atlas
6. Gender Equity Data Report - Banyule---Gender-equity-data-report.pdf
7. Gender Indicators, Australia - Gender indicators | Australian Bureau of Statistics
8. Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design - Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design
9. Gender Equity in Design Guidelines - [Whittlesea-City-Council-Gender-Equity-in-Design-Guidelines.pdf](#)
10. Gender Sensitive Urban Design Implementation Toolkit - Gender Sensitive Urban Design Implementation Toolkit
11. Handbook for Gender-Inclusive urban planning and design- content
12. Creating safe and inclusive public spaces for women: WHE-Creating-Safe-and-Inclusive-Public-Spaces-for-Women-Report-V2-September-2021.pdf
13. Female Friendly Design Guidelines

How will you find the further information you need? List useful sources.

- ☐ Internal data
- ☒ Desktop research
- ☒ Stakeholder consultations
- ☐ Other

Click or tap here to enter text.

What did the research and evidence tell you?

Make sure to reference the sources you used. List the key points below or include a link to a document summarising the evidence.

Key Findings from Research and Evidence on Heidelberg West

Demographic Composition:

Heidelberg West is characterised by a diverse population of 5,252 people. The gender distribution is relatively balanced, with slightly more females (50.3%) than males (49.7%). The community has a younger median age of 35 and a small Indigenous population (2.2%). Cultural diversity is prominent, with significant Somali, English, and Australian ancestries. A high proportion of residents were born overseas, particularly from Somalia, China, and India. English is the most spoken language at home,



followed by Somali. The predominant religious affiliation is "No Religion," followed by Islam and Catholicism.

Education: The area boasts high levels of educational attainment, with a significant portion of residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher.

Employment: Labor force participation stands at 55.3% for individuals aged 15 and over. The largest occupational group comprises professionals, followed by community and personal service workers. Major employers include hospitals, social assistance services, and aged care residential services. The median weekly personal income is \$612, while median weekly family and household incomes are \$1,682 and \$1,257, respectively.

Housing: Housing in Heidelberg West predominantly consists of separate houses and semi-detached/row/terrace houses. Renting is the most common tenure type, accounting for 54%, with a median weekly rent of \$306. For homeowners with mortgages, the median monthly repayment is \$1,900.

Families: Couple families with children represent the most common family type in the area.

Health: The rates of some chronic health conditions, such as arthritis and asthma, are generally in line with Victorian and Australian averages. However, supporting mental health services is vital, given the higher prevalence of mental health conditions in Heidelberg West compared to Greater Melbourne (Source: Victorian Women's Health Atlas).

Cultural Diversity: Heidelberg West serves as a hub for immigrant communities, particularly the Somali community, highlighting the necessity for culturally inclusive services and spaces (Source: Internal GIA session).

Housing Affordability: Tackling housing affordability is crucial, as 15% of households in the West Precinct struggle with housing costs (Source: Economic Reports).

Community Engagement: Engaging residents through surveys and consultations is essential to ensure that local planning and development align with community priorities (Source: Community Engagement Framework).

Carer Demographics: Understanding the needs of carers, predominantly female, is important for providing appropriate housing and support services (Source: Carer Statistics).

Accessibility Needs: Ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities is paramount for creating an inclusive community space (Source: Accessibility Reports).

Heidelberg West is a diverse suburb with a younger population and high levels of educational attainment. The significant Somali community is a notable characteristic, and the local economy shows a strong presence in the healthcare sector. However, housing costs, particularly rent, may pose challenges for some residents.

Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect?



This could be formal or informal consultation. If yes, please give details. If no, please explain why not.

There are many ways that the consultation can have impact on the process of providing master plan. For example, having some of the engaging sessions with the community specially the women and gender diverse groups. In term of the inclusive design, it is very important to have consultation in the first stage of the planning in all stage of the master plan such as option testing and needs assessments in all stages will be in plan and according to these parts we need to have sessions with the diverse group.

☒ Yes ☐ No

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2. What information is available to understand the lived experiences of the diverse groups who will be affected? List available information.

There are many different sources according to the experiences of diverse groups in the Mall Neighbourhood activity centre. Some of these documents are:

- Community data page
- Victorian and National Gender Data Sources
- Victorian Women's Health Atlas
- Australian Bureau of statistics website.
- Demographic Data
- Gender Equality Reports
- Health and Wellbeing Data
- Crime Statistics
- Cultural Diversity Insights
- Economic Reports
- Accessibility Assessments
- Carer Demographics
- Community Health Data
- Urban Design Principals

Do you already have this information? If yes, list sources.

☒ Yes ☐ No

All the data mentioned in the first question of Template 2, in addition to the information provided from the internal GIA session we had on 12/12/24:

- **Monash Art Design and Architecture's XYX Lab** - <https://www.monash.edu/mada/xyx-lab/projects/safe-spaces-understanding-and-enhancing-safety-and-inclusion-for-diverse-women>
- **Wudu facilities:** <https://wudumate.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2025-Diversity-Matters-email.pdf>
- **BANSIC ANNUAL REPORT2024:**
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/656d0a99eaacbe2c79accce8/t/671711d378f5e743055efb49/1729565164912/BANSIC+Annual+Report+2024+Final.pdf>



How will you find the further information you need? List useful sources.

- ☒ Internal data
- ☒ Desktop research
- ☒ Stakeholder consultations
- ☐ Other

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What did the research and evidence tell you?

The Bell Street Mall presents both challenges and opportunities that require careful consideration to create a more inclusive, safe, and vibrant space.

Challenges

Key weaknesses identified include issues related to safety, accessibility, diversity, inclusion, cleanliness, and the availability of adequate facilities. Specifically:

- **Safety Concerns:** There is a general perception of poor safety, particularly at certain times of the day and in specific areas like the car park and bus stops. The space is often male dominated, which can be intimidating for some users. Instances of alcohol and drug abuse, as well as insufficient police presence, contribute to this perception. The mall has seen escalating drug and alcohol issues, with a noticeable increase in visible substance abuse, further complicating the environment.
- **Accessibility:** Public transport is inadequate, with long walking distances to bus stops and a lack of safe and comfortable facilities, especially for older people and those with disabilities. Many individuals face unsafe zones while trying to access public transport, particularly in the evenings. Additionally, the absence of designated drop-off zones and parking for online shopping exacerbates accessibility issues.
- **Cleanliness:** Ongoing concerns about cleanliness, such as pigeon droppings and waste management, negatively impact the mall's atmosphere. The well-intentioned feeding of birds leads to more droppings, and the overall maintenance of garbage disposal is insufficient. Areas often become unsightly and unwelcoming, discouraging visitors.
- **Inclusion and Diversity:** While the mall serves a culturally diverse community, there are physical and social divides among user groups, leading to a sense of being ignored or underserved. The lack of gender-neutral toilets and adequate prayer facilities limits accessibility for various community members, reflecting a need for better-designed communal spaces that cater to all.
- **Facilities:** There are limited options for families and individuals to sit, eat, and enjoy the space. Basic amenities like clean toilets, nappy-changing areas, and shaded seating are insufficient, making it difficult for families to find comfortable spaces. Moreover, the absence of tables and chairs for dining further detracts from the experience, especially during peak times.

Opportunities

Despite these challenges, the Bell Street Mall has significant potential due to its unique characteristics and community assets:

- **Cultural Diversity:** The mall is home to a richly diverse population, including Somali, Vietnamese, Chinese, Lebanese, Greek, and Italian communities, among others. These groups



bring vibrancy and opportunities for cultural exchange, which can be harnessed to foster community events and activities that celebrate this diversity.

- **Community Hubs and Businesses:** Existing facilities such as Shop 48, the medical centre, ALDI, cafes, and retail outlets provide valuable services and gathering spaces. Recent openings of coffee shops have begun to attract more visitors and encourage social interaction. However, there is a pressing need to attract more businesses to prevent further closures and maintain the mall's vibrancy.
- **Potential for Inclusive Design:** Opportunities exist to introduce inclusive design elements and cultural facilities that reflect the diversity of the community. Implementing prayer facilities, shaded seating areas, and accessible infrastructure can significantly enhance the user experience. Additionally, creating designated spaces for children to play safely can encourage family visits and improve the overall ambiance.
- **Improving Transport and Access:** Addressing public transport inadequacies and ensuring safe walking paths can enhance accessibility. Collaborating with local transport authorities to improve service frequency and safety measures, particularly for vulnerable populations, is vital.
- **Engaging Community Voices:** Actively involving community members in planning and decision-making processes can ensure that their needs are addressed. Creating forums for dialogue can help bridge gaps between different user groups and foster a sense of belonging.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect?

This could be formal or informal consultation. If yes, please give details. If no, please explain why not.

☒ Yes ☐ No

Throughout the project, we will conduct two major consultations with the community. The first stage of community engagement focuses on insight and needs assessment in the NAC according to four main topics: Housing, Retail and Civic, Public Realm, and Transport and Movement. In the second stage, we will discuss the community's thoughts on the draft master plan and investigate different viewpoints according to cultural and gender-diverse perspectives, as well as those of the entire community.

Furthermore, we will engage in several discussions with key external stakeholders, including Homes Victoria, Austin Hospital, and Melbourne Polytechnic. Additionally, we will hold multiple meetings with various internal teams to gather their insights and recommendations regarding the project.

The most recent meeting took place on 12 December and involved specialists in the field of Gender Impact Assessment. During this session, we gained valuable insights into the current conditions of the mall, resources related to inclusive design, and recommendations for addressing cultural facilities and elements. These inputs provide critical guidance for navigating the challenges associated with the project.

How is this policy, program or service likely to have different impacts for different people?
List available information.



- **Gender Differences:** Women may feel less safe in public spaces, highlighting the need for improved safety measures. Employment disparities (27% of women vs. 47% of men in full-time jobs) suggest a focus on job accessibility and childcare.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Enhancements should support immigrant communities, especially the Somali community, by incorporating culturally relevant spaces.
- **Economic Disparities:** With 15% of households spending over 30% of income on housing, affordable housing options are essential.
- **Family Structure:** The needs of single parents (82% are women) should be addressed through community services and amenities.
- **Mental Health:** Given the higher prevalence of mental health issues, accessible green spaces and support services are necessary.
- **Carers:** With 60% of carers being female, the design should include respite services and supportive networks.
- **First Nations Engagement:** Ensuring First Nations perspectives are included is crucial for equitable planning.
- **Youth and Elderly:** The design must cater to the unique needs of both younger and older populations regarding mobility and social inclusion.
- **Children:** The design should provide safe, engaging spaces for children, including play areas and educational facilities, fostering community interaction and development.
- **Wayfinding for Inclusive Design:** Effective wayfinding systems are essential for inclusivity, helping all users—especially those with disabilities, the elderly, and non-English speakers—navigate the space easily. Incorporating clear signage, tactile surfaces, and digital navigation aids will enhance accessibility and ensure that everyone can engage fully with the environment.

Do you already have this information? If yes, list sources.

☒ Yes ☐ No

- **Banyule City, Public Realm Framework** (2024-2034).
- **Banyule Social Infrastructure Framework** (2022-2032)
- **Banyule Smoke Free Outdoor Areas Policy**
- **Banyule City Council, Health and wellbeing plan**
- **Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS):** [ABS Website](#)
- **Banyule City Council Reports:** [Banyule City Council](#)
- **Victorian Government Gender Equality Framework:** [Gender Equality Act 2020](#)
- **Victorian Women's Health Atlas:** [Victorian Women's Health Atlas](#)
- **Community Health Reports:** [Banyule Community Health](#)

How will you find the further information you need? List useful sources.

- ☐ Internal data
- ☒ Desktop research
- ☒ Stakeholder consultations
- ☐ Other

Click or tap here to enter text.

What did the research and evidence tell you?



Make sure to reference the sources you used. List the key points below or include a link to a document summarising the evidence.

The research conducted for the Bell Street Mall Masterplan and Design Guide reveals several critical insights regarding gender equity, safety, and community inclusivity:

- **Housing Development:** It is crucial to provide different types of housing from the lens of gender equality and equity, paying attention to the diverse needs of various genders and families in the community. This approach fosters inclusivity and ensures that all community members have access to suitable housing options. Some key housing considerations include:
 - Providing affordable and safe housing options for women, single parents, and gender-diverse people.
 - Ensuring housing is accessible to people with physical, mental, or cognitive disabilities.
 - Incorporating gender-responsive design principles.
 - Maintaining housing affordability across different income levels.
 - Providing access to the natural environment through features like balconies and backyards.
- **Quality of Life:** By providing varied land uses, the project seeks to improve the overall quality of life, making the mall a vibrant place for living, working, and playing.
- **Safety and Inclusivity:** The design prioritizes safety for all community groups, including gender-diverse individuals, people with disabilities, and women. Key considerations include:
 - **Lighting:** Poor lighting was identified as a significant safety concern.
 - **Social Behavior:** The presence of others and their behavior can impact feelings of safety.
 - **Visibility:** Ensuring clear sightlines to enhance safety and comfort in the space.
 - **Green Infrastructure, Public Toilets, Urban Furniture,** and the size and distribution of open spaces.
 - **Accessibility** of spaces for all people, especially those with disabilities or from diverse backgrounds.
- **Gender Equity Lens:** The research included an analysis of gender identity data in Banyule, focusing on the LGBTIQ+ community, transgender, and gender-diverse individuals.
- Findings emphasize the importance of **natural surveillance** and crime prevention through environmental design.
- **Child-Friendly Spaces:** The project aims to create engaging and safe environments for children to play, encouraging community interaction and learning.

Some of the main issues and challenges in the mall identified in the information provided include:

1. **General Vibes and Activities:** The mall experiences fluctuations in energy and foot traffic throughout the day and week, with different user groups predominating at different times.



Some businesses have closed, and the mall has been quieter since the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a lack of activities and amenities to attract people and businesses to the area.

2. **Alcohol, Drugs, and Smoking:** Alcohol and drug abuse are significant issues, contributing to an unpredictable atmosphere. Enforcing restrictions on alcohol and smoking in the mall has proven challenging.
 3. **Medical Services:** The medical centre in the mall provides important services, but there is a need for additional mental health support.
 4. **Cleanliness:** Pigeon droppings, waste management, and litter are ongoing concerns that impact the overall cleanliness and aesthetics of the mall.
 5. **Parking and Deliveries:** There are challenges with designating spaces for deliveries and pick-ups, which can cause traffic flow issues and visual clutter.
 6. **Public Transportation:** The public transportation options are perceived as inadequate, with long walking distances to bus stations and safety concerns, especially in the evenings and during winter.
 7. **Toilets and Prayer Facilities:** There is a need for more gender-neutral, well-maintained, and accessible toilet facilities, as well as designated areas for prayer and foot washing.
 8. **Thermal Comfort:** The lack of shaded areas and cool refuges during hot weather makes the mall uncomfortable for visitors.
 9. **Cultural Differences:** The diverse user groups in the mall can sometimes lead to conflicts or inconveniences due to differences in behavior and expectations.
 10. **Safety Concerns:** There is a poor perception of safety, with the mall being predominantly occupied by males and a lack of police presence.
 11. **Children's Play:** The mall is no longer seen as a safe place for children to play, as traders' children no longer play in the street.
 12. **New Developments and Housing Issues:** The influx of new residents from recent housing developments has raised concerns about the impact on the community's safety and cohesion.
 13. **People with Disabilities:** The mall needs to better accommodate the needs of people with disabilities, including more accessible toilets and addressing physical barriers.
 14. **Physical Activity:** The mall has the potential to be a hub for physical activity, with opportunities to incorporate playable elements.
- **References**
 - Victorian Women's Health Atlas: Data on gender identity and safety issues in Banyule.
 - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design: Strategies for enhancing safety in public spaces.
 - Urban Design Research: Articles on the importance of Gender Impact Assessments in community planning.

Have you consulted with affected stakeholders on this aspect?

This could be formal or informal consultation. If yes, please give details. If no, please explain why not.



☒ Yes ☐ No

Throughout the project, we will conduct two major consultations with the community. The first stage of community engagement focuses on insight and needs assessment in the NAC according to four main topics: Housing, Retail and Civic, Public Realm, and Transport and Movement. In the second stage, we will discuss the community's thoughts on the draft master plan and investigate different viewpoints according to cultural and gender-diverse perspectives, as well as those of the entire community.

Furthermore, we will engage in several discussions with key external stakeholders, including Homes Victoria, Austin Hospital, and Melbourne Polytechnic. Additionally, we will hold multiple meetings with various internal teams to gather their insights and recommendations regarding the project.

The most recent meeting took place on 12 December and involved specialists in the field of Gender Impact Assessment. During this session, we gained valuable insights into the current conditions of the mall, resources related to inclusive design, and recommendations for addressing cultural facilities and elements. These inputs provide critical guidance for navigating the challenges associated with the project.



Template 3: Options analysis

This template is designed to be used in conjunction with pages 30 to 33 of the toolkit to support you to undertake an options analysis to consider the gendered benefits and costs and overall gendered impact of your proposed policy, service or program design. This step pulls together all the analysis you have undertaken in Steps 1 and 2. There is an example at page 33 of the toolkit which may assist in completing this template.

A. Proposed Option 1

For each option describe the proposed policy solution, or design of the program or service you are working on. See page 30 for what you should include.

Proposed Option 1: Gender-Inclusive Urban Design for Bell Street Mall Redevelopment

The proposed policy solution emphasizes integrating gender-inclusive urban design principles into the redevelopment of the Bell Street Mall. This approach aims to address existing challenges while creating a vibrant, safe, and accessible space that fosters social cohesion and inclusivity for all community members, with particular attention to women, gender-diverse individuals, and marginalized groups.

1. Safety Enhancements

- **Improved Lighting and Visibility:** Install adequate lighting across the mall, particularly in car parks, bus stops, and walkways, to enhance visibility and reduce safety concerns, especially during early mornings and evenings.
- **Natural Surveillance:** Incorporate open sightlines and strategically placed seating areas to promote informal social monitoring and discourage anti-social behaviours.
- **Gender-Inclusive Design:** Integrate design principles that prioritize safety for women, children, and vulnerable groups, such as safe pedestrian pathways and visibility in high-traffic areas.
- **Visible Shops:** Ensure that shops remain visible at night by avoiding entire coverings or shutters on shop windows, allowing natural surveillance and a sense of activity in the mall.

2. Inclusive and Accessible Facilities

- **Gender-Neutral Restrooms:** Provide gender-neutral toilets and amenities that cater to diverse gender identities while also addressing the specific needs of families, such as nappy-changing and feeding areas.
- **Prayer and Cultural Facilities:** Include culturally appropriate elements like foot-washing stations for prayer, inspired by the Islamic Museum of Australia, to support the needs of the Somali and Muslim communities.
- **Family-Friendly Spaces:** Develop safe and shaded play areas for children and seating areas where families can gather for meals or leisure.

3. Culturally Sensitive Design and Programming

- **Representation of Cultural Diversity:** Design community spaces that reflect the cultural identities of the area's diverse groups, including Somali, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Greek, and Italian residents.
- **Cultural Events and Programs:** Facilitate programming that celebrates cultural festivals and traditions, fostering a sense of belonging and social cohesion among different communities.



- **Avoid Exclusion:** Ensure that cultural representation is inclusive and avoids favouring one group over others, promoting unity and bridging divides among different demographics.

4. Economic Support for Local Businesses

- **Support for Women-Owned and Multicultural Businesses:** Provide targeted initiatives to support women entrepreneurs and culturally specific businesses, such as dress alteration or hairdressing services, which align with the needs of the community.
- **Pop-Up Markets and Events:** Encourage local artisans and businesses to participate in regular markets and pop-up events that attract diverse visitors and promote economic activity.
- **Home-Based Business Opportunities:** Include housing options that allow residents, particularly women, to operate small businesses from their homes, fostering economic independence.

5. Community Engagement and Representation

- **Inclusive Consultation Processes:** Continuously involve women, gender-diverse individuals, and marginalized groups in decision-making through workshops, surveys, and focus groups.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish channels for residents to share their experiences and provide input on the mall's redevelopment, ensuring that their voices are heard and incorporated.

6. Environmental and Thermal Comfort Considerations

- **Shaded and Cool Areas:** Install shaded seating and "cool refuges" to ensure that the mall remains inviting during hot weather.
- **Bird and Waste Management:** Implement solutions to address issues with pigeon droppings and waste management while keeping the area clean and pleasant.

B. Gendered costs and benefits

Use your analysis in Steps 1 and 2 to identify the potential benefits and costs of your proposed policy, program or service. See page 31 for some guiding questions.

Benefits

- **Enhanced Safety:** Improved lighting, open sightlines, and community surveillance will foster a safer environment.
- **Increased Inclusivity:** Accessible facilities, culturally appropriate spaces, and gender-sensitive design will ensure the mall is welcoming to all.
- **Economic Revitalization:** Support for local businesses and markets will attract visitors and encourage economic activity.
- **Community Cohesion:** Culturally sensitive programming and inclusive consultation processes will promote unity and reduce divides among different user groups.
- **Environmental Improvements:** Addressing waste, bird droppings, and thermal comfort will create a cleaner and more enjoyable space.

Costs and risks

- **Financial Investment:** Implementing these design changes will require initial funding for infrastructure improvements, community programs, and ongoing maintenance.



- **Potential Disruption:** Construction activities may temporarily disrupt local businesses and community routines during the redevelopment phase.

C. Overall gender impact

Assess the overall gender impact. Do the benefits outweigh the costs or vice versa? Figure 6 on page 32 provides some examples of negative and positive outcomes. See also the examples on page 33.

The proposed gender-inclusive urban design option is expected to have a positive overall impact on the community by addressing the specific needs of different genders, enhancing safety, promoting economic participation, and fostering social inclusion. By focusing on gender equity, the project aims to create a more vibrant and equitable environment for all residents, ultimately contributing to the long-term sustainability and livability of the Bell Street Mall area.

A. Proposed Option 2

For each option describe the proposed policy solution, or design of the program or service you are working on. See page 30 for what you should include.

Proposed Option 2: Affordable and Social Housing Development

The proposed policy solution focuses on delivering affordable and social housing as a key component of the Bell Street Mall Masterplan and Design Guide. This initiative aims to maximize housing delivery within the mall and its catchment area while addressing the diverse needs of the community through a gender impact assessment lens.

Key Components of the Proposed Option

- **Diverse Housing Types:**
 - Development of various housing options, including single-room occupancy units, family-sized apartments, and co-housing arrangements, to accommodate different household compositions and income levels.
 - Inclusion of accessible housing designed specifically for individuals with disabilities and gender-diverse people, ensuring equitable access to safe living spaces.
- **Gender-Informed Design:**
 - Incorporation of features that consider the specific needs of women and gender-diverse individuals, such as secure entry points, adequate lighting, and communal spaces that promote social interaction.
 - Design elements that facilitate flexible living arrangements, catering to single-parent families and multigenerational households, which are prevalent in the Banyule area.
- **Community Integration:**
 - Housing developments that prioritize proximity to essential services, public transport, and community amenities, fostering a sense of belonging and accessibility.
 - Engagement with local communities during the planning process to ensure that the housing solutions reflect their needs and preferences.
- **Vision for Housing Delivery:**
 - The project will prioritize maximizing housing delivery within the Bell Street Mall and surrounding areas, addressing the growing demand for affordable housing in Banyule, which has seen a significant rise in housing costs.

B. Gendered costs and benefits



Use your analysis in Steps 1 and 2 to identify the potential benefits and costs of your proposed policy, program or service. See page 31 for some guiding questions.

Benefits

- **Increased Housing Affordability:** The provision of affordable and social housing will directly address the housing affordability crisis, particularly benefiting low-income families and individuals, including women and gender-diverse people.
- **Support for Vulnerable Populations:** Targeting housing solutions for single-parent families (82% of whom are women) and individuals facing discrimination will foster social equity and inclusion.
- **Enhanced Safety and Well-being:** Thoughtful design that prioritizes safety, accessibility, and community engagement will improve the quality of life for residents, particularly for women and marginalized groups.
- **Economic Empowerment:** By providing stable and affordable housing, individuals will have increased capacity to pursue employment and educational opportunities, contributing to overall economic stability in the community.

Costs and risks

- **Initial Investment:** Significant upfront funding will be required for the construction of affordable housing units, which may be a challenge in budget-constrained environments.
- **Potential Community Resistance:** There may be concerns from existing residents regarding the integration of social housing, necessitating effective communication and community engagement strategies to mitigate opposition.
- **Long-term Maintenance:** Ongoing costs associated with the maintenance and management of affordable housing may strain resources if not adequately planned for.

C. Overall gender impact

Assess the overall gender impact. Do the benefits outweigh the costs or vice versa? Figure 6 on page 32 provides some examples of negative and positive outcomes. See also the examples on page 33.

The overall gender impact of the proposed affordable and social housing initiative is expected to be positive. By addressing the specific needs of women, gender-diverse individuals, and economically disadvantaged groups, the benefits of increased housing affordability, safety, and community integration outweigh the associated costs and risks.

- **Positive Outcomes:** Enhanced access to affordable housing will promote gender equity, reduce homelessness rates among women, and support vulnerable populations, aligning with the objectives of the Gender Equality Act 2020.
- **Statistical Support:** According to Banyule City Council data, 51% of residents identify as female, with a significant portion facing economic disparities. Addressing these through targeted housing solutions will be crucial for fostering an inclusive community.



Template 4: Making recommendations

The final step in the gender impact assessment process is to make a final recommendation based on your analysis. Provide a rationale for the proposed recommendation and include any mitigation strategies that could be used to avoid any harmful unintended outcomes

Recommendation

See page 34 of the toolkit for an example of a recommendation.

Key recommendations to enhance the Bell Street Mall through the lens of inclusivity and gender equity is:

1. Safety Enhancements:

- Improve lighting and visibility in the mall, especially in high-traffic areas like car parks, bus stops, and walkways.
- Incorporate open sightlines and strategically placed seating areas to promote natural surveillance and deter anti-social behaviours.
- Integrate gender-inclusive design principles that prioritize safety for women, children, and vulnerable groups.
- Ensure shops remain visible at night by avoiding excessive coverings or shutters on windows.

2. Inclusive and Accessible Facilities:

- Provide gender-neutral restrooms and amenities that cater to diverse gender identities and address the needs of families.
- Include culturally appropriate elements like foot-washing stations to support the Somali and Muslim communities.
- Develop safe and shaded play areas for children, as well as seating areas where families can gather.

3. Culturally Sensitive Design and Programming:

- Design community spaces that reflect the cultural identities of the area's diverse groups, including Somali, Vietnamese, Lebanese, Greek, and Italian residents.
- Facilitate programming that celebrates cultural festivals and traditions, fostering a sense of belonging and social cohesion.
- Ensure cultural representation is inclusive and avoids favouring one group over others.

4. Economic Support for Local Businesses:

- Provide targeted initiatives to support women entrepreneurs and culturally specific businesses.
- Encourage local artisans and businesses to participate in regular markets and pop-up events.



- Include housing options that allow residents, particularly women, to operate small businesses from their homes.

5. Community Engagement and Representation:

- Continuously involve women, gender-diverse individuals, and marginalized groups in decision-making through workshops, surveys, and focus groups.
- Establish channels for residents to share their experiences and provide input on the mall's redevelopment.

6. Environmental and Thermal Comfort Considerations:

- Install shaded seating and "cool refuges" to ensure the mall remains inviting during hot weather.
- Implement solutions to address issues with pigeon droppings and waste management, maintaining cleanliness and a pleasant environment.

7. Housing Solutions:

- Advocate for social and affordable housing that accommodates larger and multi-generational families.
- Facilitate housing that allows individuals, especially women, to run businesses from home, such as dress alterations and hairdressing.

These recommendations aim to create a more inclusive, safe, and vibrant Bell Street Mall that caters to the diverse needs of the community, with a particular focus on addressing gender equity and promoting social cohesion. By implementing these strategies, the project can contribute to the long-term sustainability and livability of the area, serving as a model for inclusive urban development.

Description

Include here the rationale for your recommendation as well as any mitigation strategies needed. In line with the Gender Equality Act, explain how your recommendation meets the needs of persons of different genders; addresses gender inequality; and promotes gender equality.

▪ Implement Gender-Inclusive Urban Design Principles in the Bell Street Mall Redevelopment

Implementing gender-inclusive urban design principles is essential for creating a safe, accessible, and welcoming environment for all community members, particularly women and gender-diverse individuals. This approach ensures that public spaces cater to diverse needs, promoting social inclusion and enhancing participation in community life.

- **Meeting Diverse Needs:** By prioritizing safety, accessibility, and community engagement, this design will address the unique challenges faced by various genders, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment.

- **Economic and Social Benefits:** Supporting women-owned businesses and creating culturally sensitive spaces will enhance local economies and strengthen community ties.

▪ Strategies:

- **Ongoing Community Engagement:** Establish regular forums for residents to provide feedback and contribute to planning processes, ensuring their voices are heard and considered.
- **Training for Planners and Developers:** Implement training programs focused on gender-sensitive design principles to ensure all stakeholders understand and prioritize these aspects during development.



▪ **Build a Comprehensive Range of Housing Options to Address Diverse Community Needs, Ensuring Accessibility and Safety for All Genders.**

The development of a comprehensive affordable and social housing strategy is crucial for addressing the housing crisis in Banyule, particularly for vulnerable populations such as women and gender-diverse individuals. This initiative will provide safe and affordable housing options, thereby promoting gender equity and economic stability.

- **Support for Vulnerable Groups:** Targeted housing solutions for single-parent families and individuals facing discrimination will foster social equity and inclusion.
- **Long-term Economic Empowerment:** By providing stable housing, individuals can pursue education and employment opportunities, contributing to overall community resilience.
- **Strategies:**
 - **Community Workshops:** Develop campaigns to inform existing residents about the benefits of affordable housing and dispel myths associated with social housing developments.
 - **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Implement a framework for assessing the impact of the housing strategy on different genders and demographics, allowing for adjustments based on community feedback.

Both recommendations aim to create a more equitable and inclusive environment in the Bell Street Mall area. By implementing gender-inclusive urban design and a comprehensive affordable housing strategy, the project will address the needs of diverse community members, reduce gender disparities, and promote overall social cohesion. These actions align with the objectives of the Gender Equality Act, ensuring that all individuals have equal access to safe, supportive living and community spaces.