

MINUTES

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 28 April 2026
6:00 pm

City Hall
57 Little Malop Street, Geelong 3220

LIVE STREAMED ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE:

www.geelongaustralia.com.au/meetings

COUNCIL:

Cr S Kontelj (Kardinia Ward) - Mayor
Cr E Kontelj (Hamlyn Heights Ward) - Deputy Mayor
Cr R Nelson (Barrabool Hills Ward)
Cr E Sinclair (Charlemont Ward)
Cr M Cadwell (Cheetham Ward)
Cr E Wilkinson (Connewarre Ward)
Cr A Aitken (Corio Ward)
Cr A Katos (Deakin Ward)
Cr T Sullivan (Leopold Ward)
Cr R Story (Murradoc Ward)
Cr C Burson (You Yangs Ward)

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Present: Cr S Kontelj
Cr R Nelson
Cr T Sullivan
Cr A Aitken
Cr E Wilkinson
Cr E Sinclair
Cr A Katos
Cr E Kontelj
Cr M Cadwell
Cr R Story
Cr C Burson

Also Present: T Edwards (Acting Chief Executive Officer), M Thomson (Acting Executive Director, Corporate Services), J Randles (Acting Executive Director, Growth and Place) J Stirton (Executive Director, City Infrastructure), A Basford (Executive Director City Life), C Norton (Manager Council and Executive Services) J Douglas (Manager Council & Corporate Governance) E Ryan (Senior Governance Advisor – Council Business) D Pangrazio (Governance Advisor – Council Business).

Opening: The Mayor declared the meeting open at 6.06pm.

1. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1. Acknowledgement of Country

Council acknowledges the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the Land, Waterways and Skies. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are part of our Greater Geelong community today.

1.2. Apologies

Nil

1.3. Leaves of Absence

RESOLUTION - Item 1.3.1

Cr E Wilkinson moved, Cr E Sinclair seconded –

That Leave of Absence be granted to Cr R Nelson from 3 May 2026 to 11 May 2026, inclusive.

Carried

RESOLUTION - Item 1.3.2

Cr E Kontelj moved, Cr R Story seconded –

That Leave of Absence be granted to Cr S Kontelj from 13 June 2026 to 30 June 2026, inclusive.

Carried

RESOLUTION - Item 1.3.3

Cr R Story moved, Cr E Wilkinson seconded –

That Leave of Absence be granted to Cr E Sinclair from 29 June 2026 to 13 July 2026, inclusive.

Carried

RESOLUTION - Item 1.3.4

Cr R Nelson moved, Cr A Katos seconded –

That Leave of Absence be granted to Cr E Kontelj from 25 May 2026 to 27 May 2026, inclusive.

Carried

1.4. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

Nil

1.5. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLUTION - Item 1.5.1

Cr E Kontelj moved, Cr R Story seconded -

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 24 March 2026 be confirmed.

Carried

1.6. Public Question and Submission Time

Question and Submission Time is an opportunity for questions to be addressed to Council and while the minutes record the general content, they do not purport to be a transcript of what was said by individuals. Likewise, Councillor or Officer verbal responses are in summary form only. Views expressed may not be the views of Council.

The following persons submitted questions prior to the Council Meeting and presented them at the Council Meeting, on the following subjects:

- Gary Griffin - St Leonards Early Learning Victoria Centre
- Jenny Knox - St Leonards Early Learning Victoria Centre
- Jeanne Nel - 45 Riversdale Road, Newtown
- Marie Neurath - Creche Services
- Ewan Wymer as Proxy for Mikhaila Dignam - Creche Services
- Ewan Wymer - Creche Services
- Natalie - Creche Services
- Belinda White - Creche Services
- Austin Clark - Creche Services
- Belinda White As Proxy For Aleta Moriarty – Creche Services
- Ane Glahn-Bertelsen - Creche Services
- Nick Jones as Proxy for Emma Jones - Creche Services
- Nick Jones - Creche Services

The following persons submitted questions prior to the Council Meeting but were not in attendance to present them at the Council Meeting, on the following subjects:

- Julie Gardiner - Planning & Environmental Impacts
- Cassidy Pritchard - School Crossings
- Elise Carey – Creche Services
- Natika Van Hulst - Creche Services
- Ashlea Scannell - Creche Services
- Gary Oraniuk - Creche Services

SUBMITTER 1. JULIE GARDINER

Subject: PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Relevant City Department: Growth and Place

Question 1:

We recently had a very large building erected next door to us (address 113 The Terrace, Ocean Grove) We were told the assessment of our loss of sunlight was done undertaken against the September Equinox, Due to this assessment and allowance for the building to be erected we have lost the winter sunshine that we once enjoyed. We now need to need rely on our heating which ongoing will be costly for us not to mention environmentally negative. We would like the council to consider that these future assessments for other like buildings be done in the Winter solstice to be fair on the environment and consideration of neighbours.

Question 1 Response

Thank you for your question and for reaching out regarding multi-unit development proposals.

When evaluating multi-unit developments, Councils are required to follow the state-based planning scheme requirements outlined under Clause 55. This applies specifically to developments with two or more dwellings on a single lot.

Standard B21 of Clause 55 ensures that the secluded private open space of an existing dwelling receives a minimum of five hours of sunlight between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm on 22 September, which is the spring equinox. Council assessments focus on this date, as the legislation is designed around spring equinox conditions to provide a fair and consistent approach.

The planning controls do not require consideration of overshadowing during the winter solstice. This means Council is not able to mandate changes to a development proposal based on overshadowing impacts occurring at that time of year. These are statewide provisions and cannot be altered by the City. If you have concerns regarding the provisions you would need to raise this with your State Government representative.

Question 2:

In regard to demolition and environmental impact I would like it tabled and discussed at the next Council meeting that the overseeing of demolition of a complete house and garden put into landfill is totally unacceptable and that the Council should make it their business to check what is happening to the environment. When the house was demolished, we had dust particles settle inside our house (even with windows shut) and were breathing in no doubt asbestos particles. This is totally unacceptable. We are also very concerned about the people that work in Waste disposal sites. What are their rights? This has now happened and we would like the council to review this process as it seems there were no rules in place for this building at 113 The Terrace, Ocean Grove.

Question 2 Response

With regard to staff, the safety of our team at our waste disposal facilities is our priority. There are processes in place to ensure potential exposure to dust and debris is minimised, including specific requirements for disposal of asbestos.

SUBMITTER 2. CASSIDY PRITCHARD

Subject: SCHOOL CROSSINGS

Relevant City Department: City Infrastructure

Question 1:

Can we create a pedestrian crossing or a school crossing with a paid crossing supervisors for the corner of Fenwick street and Little Myers street? For the last few decades, there has been a school bus interchange at Little Myers street and Fenwick street for multiple high schools in Geelong. Every day, approximately 300+ students have to cross Little Myers street when walking down Fenwick to the bus interchange and it is an incredibly busy and dangerous crossing. There is no pedestrian crossing or school crossing in place here and teachers from Matthew Flinders GSC have been trying to manage this space by building extra yard duties into their busy schedules as well as acting as crossing supervisors after school but I'm contacting you to request that we get a pedestrian crossing or a school crossing down here to help support the teachers and the safety of our students.

Question 1 Response

Thank you for your question Cassidy.

The City acknowledges that this location operates as a long established school bus interchange for multiple secondary schools.. We also recognise the efforts of staff from Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College who are currently assisting students in this area.

The City takes student and pedestrian safety seriously. In response to the concerns raised, pedestrian and traffic assessments will be undertaken during May to better understand traffic conditions, pedestrian movements and safety risks at this location.

The provision of pedestrian or school crossings, including paid crossing supervisors, is assessed against established engineering standards and guidelines, which consider factors such as traffic volumes, vehicle speeds and pedestrian demand. The findings of these assessments will inform whether additional safety treatments are warranted.

Community feedback is an important part of Council's safety planning, and this request will be considered alongside other priorities across the municipality. The City will provide an update once the assessments are complete and an approach has been determined.

SUBMITTER 3. GARY GRIFFIN

Subject: St Leonards Early Learning Victoria Centre

Relevant City Department: Growth & Place

Question 1:

In light of the recent announcement made by Allison Marchant MLA, of an Early Learning Centre for St Leonards, what plan does the City of Greater Geelong have for the funds{\$3.7 million} collected for this purpose through the levy attached to the St Leonards Development Plan 2015 and adopted in council minutes November 2016.

Response:

Thank you for your questions Gary. The City welcomes the delivery of the much-needed Early Learning Victoria Centre in St Leonards by the State Government.

The State announced last week that the Centre will open in 2028 next to St Leonards Primary School. The Centre was previously announced in December 2025, without a delivery year identified. The Centre will be State-owned, and government-operated childcare centre delivering integrated Kindergarten and is planned to include community spaces and Maternal and Child Health services.

The '2015 St Leonards Growth Area 2 Shared Infrastructure Funding Plan' includes a contribution towards an Early Years and Community Hub. Upon release of further details on the Early Learning Centre by the State Government, Council can progress consideration of the best utilisation of these funds to ensure the best outcome for the St Leonards community.

Question 2:

Will the CoGG be putting the interest earned from this money for the financial year 2025/26 back into the fund?

Response:

Thank you Gary, the interest received on our cash reserves, including Developer Contributions, is recognised as general revenue of the City and is used to fund the services and infrastructure we deliver.

SUBMITTER 4. JENNY KNOX**Subject: St Leonards Early Learning Victoria Centre****Relevant City Department: Growth & Place****Question 1:**

In 2019, my husband and I purchased land in the New Seachange Estate, Stage 1. Like many other landowners, we paid both the Infrastructure Contribution and the Community Centre Cash Contribution under the Section 173 Agreements adopted by Council in 2016. Those minutes make it clear that these contributions were legally tied to delivering an Early Learning Community Centre in St Leonards, and that Council would be responsible for acquiring land and constructing that facility. With delayed payments and indexation, the fund now exceeds \$3.7 million — money contributed in good faith by property owners. We also understand that interest earned on this fund has been transferred into consolidated revenue rather than retained within the Section 173 fund. Since 2016, circumstances have changed significantly. The Victorian Government has now announced it will fully fund an Early Learning and Community Centre on land it has compulsorily acquired from the Catholic Church, at no cost to Council. This creates uncertainty for residents and contributors. If the State Government is now delivering the project our contributions were intended to fund, what is Council's plan for the \$3.7 million already collected? Question: The 2016 Section 173 Agreements legally bind Council to use purchaser contributions to deliver an Early Learning Community Centre. What is Council's intention regarding the current funds and future payments to this fund?

Response:

Thank you for your question. The City welcomes the delivery of the much-needed Early Learning Victoria Centre in St Leonards by the State Government.

The '2015 St Leonards Growth Area 2 Shared Infrastructure Funding Plan' includes a contribution towards an Early Years and Community Hub. Upon release of further details on the Early Learning Centre by the State Government, Council can progress consideration of the best utilisation of these funds to ensure the best outcome for the St Leonards community.

Question 2:

If Council determines that the State-funded Centre satisfies the obligations set out in the Section 173 Agreements, what process will Council follow to amend or vary those agreements, and how will Council determine the lawful use of the \$3.7 plus million contribution?

Response:

This is very much a watch this space, once further details are known Council can progress consideration of the best utilisation of these funds to ensure the best outcome for the St Leonards community.

SUBMITTER 5. JEANNE NEL**Subject: 45 Riversdale Road, Newtown****Relevant City Department: Growth & Place****Question 1:**

The Schedule to Clause 43.01 Heritage Overlay of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme requires that applications involving major ground disturbance in the HO1617 Rocky Point heritage area, at 49–53 Riversdale Road, Newtown, include an archaeological survey to determine whether there are any sub-surface remains of the mineral spring complex, aboriginal sites, or other artefacts of significance. In relation to the planning application for 45 Riversdale Road, Newtown, also known as the Barwon River Business Park, Council's heritage advisor noted that this requirement needed to be considered. The advisor also stated: "The provision of a CHMP [Cultural Heritage Management Plan] should therefore inform the assessment of this application," while noting that their response was confined to post-European contact heritage. QUESTION: Could Council please advise whether an archaeological survey and Cultural Heritage Management Plan were prepared for this application, and, if so, where residents can access those documents?

Response:

Thank you for your question Jeanne. No archaeological survey or CHMP were prepared as they were not required.

It is noted that under the Heritage Act, 2017, Heritage Victoria is the Responsible authority for historical archaeological values. An archaeological survey was not required in accordance with the planning controls. In terms of the CHMP, the permit applicant provided evidence that satisfied that no CHMP was required.

Question 2:

The City's Public Question and Submission Time Policy provides that 45 minutes is allocated for public questions and submissions at a meeting; that, at the Chairperson's discretion, a person may ask a question or make a submission without notice; and that the Chairperson or Chief Executive Officer may take a question on notice and provide a written response. The Policy also sets out the grounds on which a question may be precluded. At the March Council meeting, a question from the floor was not accepted on the basis that Council staff had not had an opportunity to prepare a response, despite there being at least five minutes remaining in the allocated public question time. At the same meeting, a question I had submitted in advance was declined on the basis that it was operational in nature. QUESTION: I would be grateful if Council could please clarify the policy basis for these decisions. In particular, could Council identify which provisions of the Public Question and Submission Time Policy, Public Transparency Policy, Community Engagement Policy, Governance Rules, or any other relevant policy or instrument were relied upon when determining that these questions should not be asked or answered at the meeting?

Response by Mayor:

Thank you Jeanne.

I have taken a consistent approach to concluding question time once all formal submitters prior to the Monday midday deadline have been heard, using my discretion in line with the policy. This is outlined in Section 5 of the policy "Questions Without Notice - At the Chairperson's discretion, a person can ask a question or make a submission at a Meeting without notice." Following last month's Council Meeting I met with the community member you refer to, to discuss the concerns.

Public Question and Submission Time is intended to provide an opportunity for Council to hear community views on matters within its remit in an orderly and respectful forum. It is not intended to function as a customer service channel, complaint mechanism, or review process for operational matters administered by Council officers or other authorities.

In this instance, the matters raised were more appropriately addressed through Council's operational channels, which allowed officers to provide detailed information on the number of website hits in line with Section 7 of the policy.

Jeanne asked a follow up question noting a point of clarification in relation to clarifying the basis on which her previous question was precluded.

The Mayor advised that the follow up question will be taken on notice and a response will be provided.

Cr E Kontelj left the meeting at 6.27pm.

Cr E Kontelj returned to the meeting at 6.29pm.

SUBMITTER 6. MARIE NEURATH

Subject: Creche Services

Relevant City Department: City Life

Question 1:

Swim sport and leisure creche closure. 1. How can I train at Swim, Sport and Leisure safely with children? What alternatives are there if there is no creche? I haven't been informed of an alternative for my children to attend the gym while I exercise. I'd love to suggest alternatives but haven't been consulted. The Swim sport and leisure website states: "Swim Sport and Leisure centres provide safe and inclusive spaces for health, fitness and recreation in the Greater Geelong region." I don't feel included as I can't train safely with children without a creche.

Question 2:

Can you confirm if a gender impact assessment has been carried out on the proposed creche service closure and what the findings and recommendations of that assessment were?

SUBMITTER 7. ELISE CAREY

Subject: Creche Services

Relevant City Department: City Life

Question 1:

Regarding the proposed closure of the crèches at City of Greater Geelong Swim Sport and Leisure Centres, has the council considered the detrimental effects on the mental and physical health of parents living in Geelong? If so, what is your understanding of what these detrimental effects might be and how have you investigated this? - for example have you done surveys, studies, interviews? How do you justify these effects?

Question 2:

Regarding the proposed closure of the crèches at City of Greater Geelong Swim Sport and Leisure Centres, how can the council be sure that the money saved from closing the creche will make up for extra money spent on healthcare due to parents being unable to exercise and children unable to attend swimming lessons? (While their siblings are in the creche).

SUBMITTER 8. MIKHAILA DIGNAM**Subject: Creche Services****Relevant City Department: City Life****Question 1:**

My name is Mikhaila, I am an East Geelong resident and work as a Registered Mental Health Nurse in a Child and Family Mental Health and Wellbeing Service. I am disturbed by the council's decision to close Creche Services which is a direct hit to women and families. These are Essential Services, staffed by essential workers. There is no substitute for these services, or anywhere else that we can go as parents for this occasional care. These centres are essential for community and family mental health and wellbeing. The council and leisure centres have spoken about 'sustainability' as the reason for closing these creches. I want to be clear that all of us want the same thing: for this essential service to be sustainable.

In my correspondence about this issue, I was informed by a senior council officer that public consultation was occurring and that "all options have been and are being considered in regards to the creche operations."

My question is: Given ALL options have reportedly been considered can the council please speak to what options other than closing the creche have been explored to keep this essential service open?

Question 2:

The data underpinning this decision to close essential creche services says that there are only 75 members currently engaged with creche services, that the service is underutilised and that there was community consultation as part of this process. There has also been reference to a gender impact statement.

The number of 75 is inaccurate as it only captures people who use the creche who are currently Swim, Sport and Leisure members. This excludes countless Geelong families who depend on these essential creche services on a casual basis, but are not members - including mine. Furthermore, the stipulation that creche services are underutilised is different to the everyday experience of families, many of whom report contacting the creches to be told that the service is booked out.

Regarding the alleged 'consultation.' I am a member of a Facebook Group with over 120 community members concerned about creche closures, and when the group was polled recently, no one, I repeat no one was consulted by the council on this issue.

My question is:

Why were not any current users of the creche involved in the consultation process to inform this decision which is a massive hit to women in our community? (NB: if the council alleges current users were consulted, can they please advise how many families were consulted and what their feedback was?)

SUBMITTER 9. EWAN WYMER

Subject: Creche Services

Relevant City Department: City Life

Question 1:

Creche closures: - What options have been explored in relation to increasing the utilisation of the creches? Please respond with particular focus on what advertising or marketing efforts have been made to make sure new parents are aware of the service.

Question 2:

Creche Closures: - Has there been any assessment of what the impact of closing the sport and leisure creches would be on users of the creches service? Could you please share the results of that assessment publicly if it has been done?

SUBMITTER 10. NATALIE

Subject: Creche Services

Relevant City Department: City Life

Question 1:

Re- COGG's decision to close creche centers across council run gyms Was a Gender Impact Assessment conducted before closing crèche services, given that the overwhelming majority of users are women, and if so, what were the findings?

Question 2:

Re- the closure of creches across SSL facilities The council stated on its facebook page that it was “in ongoing talks with the families that use creche facilities” prior to deciding to close these facilities. Can the council detail what specific consultation this refers to, including when these talks occurred, how many members were directly contacted, and through what channels? Given that multiple affected members, myself included, were not contacted or aware of any such discussions, how did the council determine that these “ongoing talks” constituted adequate consultation before making this decision?

SUBMITTER 11. BELINDA WHITE

Subject: Creche Services

Relevant City Department: City Life

Question 1:

Can the councillors please disclose the number of briefings they received relating to the continuation of creche services, including the briefing received relating to the Gender Impact Assessment, I specifically request that the GIA is tabled here at this meeting so that councillors have the opportunity to fully scrutinise it's contents, including its impartiality and the full disclosure of whom within council was appointed to coordinate the GIA with full transparency on the name of the external organisation contracted to conduct the GIA on behalf of Council?

Question 2:

At the last Council Meeting on 24 March, the community were reassured that no decision had been made about the proposed closure of creche services at Swim Sport and Leisure locations, with this in mind, I wish to request a copy of the draft budget that was prepared for the Swim Sport and Leisure facilities, with full transparency on the budget line items for creche services at this time. I do understand the budget process for council, whereby a draft is gazetted for feedback, however I would expect to see that the creche was budgeted for at this point in time, if in fact a decision had not been made to close the creche services. This transparency would be appreciated by all families and parties that have signed the petition that was submitted on 24 March and for those members of the community that signed the petition that is being presented today.

SUBMITTER 12. AUSTIN CLARK

Subject: Creche Services

Relevant City Department: City Life

Question 1:

Hi Councillors, my name is Austin Clark, I am an eleven year old boy and I live in Geelong West. I have been going to the creche at Leisurelink since I was 2 years old. I love spending time with the carers and my friends at the creche. I have made lots a great friends at the creche. My mum is healthy and fit and that makes me and my sister very happy it also encourages us to be healthy and fit too. I have a question for you all, I wondered if you could please come and see the creche at Leisurelink for yourself to see what a wonderful place it is? All my friends would love to welcome you so you can see all the awesome activities we do there. We think you would all love it as much as we do!

SUBMITTER 13. ALETA MORIARTY

Subject: Creche Services

Relevant City Department: City Life

Question 1:

Which councillors approved the decision to shut down the creches, and had they viewed the relevant documents including gender impact assessments, and if you can not demonstrate that this decision had awareness and approval by councillors, would your request this decision to be revisited by councillors given the large amount of demonstrable community opposition, large community impact to this decision and lack of genuine community consultation.

Question 2:

Given the lack of community consultation around creche closures I ask the council directly is the decision to exit childcare all together being pursued by COGG? And if so, do you intend to do genuine consultation, including genuine two way dialogue and public release of all relevant information, around this decision or just force another decision through against community wishes?

SUBMITTER 14. NATIKA VAN HULST

Subject: Creche Services

Relevant City Department: City Life

Question 1:

Relating to creche closure. Fernwood Gym have a creche, it is an extra \$15 weekly for participating members. How is this possible, when it is "apparently" not possible for Swim Sport and Leisure Gyms? This is clearly a gym that truly appreciates, understands and cares for the health and well-being of its members. At \$15 p/w, it's significantly cheaper than what most would pay at SSL.

SUBMITTER 15. ANE GLAHN BERTELSE

Subject: Creche Services

Relevant City Department: City Life

Question 1:

Geelong council has a Social Inclusion Action Group which recognises single parents as being at particularly high risk (57%) of being lonely. Loneliness being a huge health and wellbeing impact, the 2025 Geelong Social Inclusion Needs Analysis says 'social inclusion is about making sure everyone has the opportunity to participate fully in all parts of life' and that systemic and structural barriers such as access and engagement to 'essential services and reduced life opportunities' are the main contributor to social isolation and loneliness. Considering that Geelong crèche services are an essential service to access both care and health facilities for single parents and post partum mums and families with low income and low support, can Geelong council explain why they have cut this essential service, particularly when single and low income families are at significant risk of loneliness and social exclusion? Is this decision not in direct contradiction to the aim of the social inclusion needs analysis and action group?

SUBMITTER 16. ASHLEA SCANNELL**ATTENDING****Subject: Creche Services****Relevant City Department: City Life****Question 1:**

In regards to the closure of council creche at swim,sport and leisure centres. When the announcement came out we were told in the email/letter/facebook post (multiple places this was stated) that families would be contacted to ensure we were looked after and help make things work. I put my kids into the creche so that i can exercise 3-4 days a week and another mum friend was attending 5 days a week using creche. We dont know ANY family that was contacted to help us continue on with our fitness lifestyle that are extremely crucial to us and our mental and emotional health. A 3 month free membership is amazing... but who is going to look after our children while we attend!? That is still the issue!!!

Question 2:

If the creche was losing the centres money, why were no new policies and procedures put in place to help it succeed instead of watching it slowly go down the drain. The closure is going to cost ALOT of parents their emotional and mental health. Whos going to pick up those piece's!? Automate the booking system and allow parents to book and pay online, build an app or add it to the portal that already exists, payment taken if session is cancelled within a time frame to cover staff, up the prices!!! As a busy Mum that relies heavily on the service i would pay \$10 an hr and also pay if i needed to cancel on short notice. If thats what it takes then do it! Advertisement!!! The creche is NOT advertised or marketed at all. The new Norlane Arc sign doesnt state there is a creche at the centre was built with one in it.

SUBMITTER 17. GARY ORANIUK

Subject: Creche Services

Relevant City Department: City Life

Question 1:

Will the councilors vote to retain these creches, and if not, are they willing to have denial of service, and possibly, misrepresentation, charges brought against them?

SUBMITTER 18. EMMA JONES**Subject: Creche Services****Relevant City Department: City Life****Question 1:**

Hello Councillors, Addressing the point that genuine public consultation has been ignored throughout this process I Emma Jones am having my husband Nick ask the following question on my behalf as I'm home pregnant taking care of our toddler. To help families through the transition of loosing creche services, the council has offered families three months of free access to facilities and complementary swimming lessons for member's children. This offer has outlined to us the complete lack of understanding from Swim Sport and Leisure and The City Council of why these creche services are so important. For most families, we are no longer able to access any facilities as we no longer have creche childcare available. For many families with multiple children, the only way they can access swimming lessons for one child is by having the childcare option available for the other children. To put it plainly: it's not possible to attend a swimming lesson, swimming in the pool with one child whilst caring for other children. It is not possible, nor allowed, to exercise ourselves in the gym or in a fitness class with a child at our side. Is the City Council or Gyms able to provide any useful assistance to families to help counter the negative impact this decision has had on us? For eg. refunding 3 months of membership and swimming lessons already used rather than offering 3 months of free membership we can no longer access?

Question 2:

Furthermore, will the date used to support the decision to close down our creche services be made available to the public for independent review?

SUBMITTER 19. NICK JONES

Subject: Creche Services

Relevant City Department: City Life

Closing crèche services is not a neutral budget adjustment it is a direct hit to working families, particularly women, who rely on flexible, short-term care to participate in exercise, appointments community and life. These services are often the difference between being able to attend appointments, training, or maintain a healthy mental state and being forced out altogether. Removing them increases pressure on already stretched families, reduces accessibility to council services, and disproportionately impacts those with the least flexibility or support. More concerning still, this decision appears to have been shaped in an environment where staff have not felt safe to speak openly or contribute meaningfully and has skipped public consultation altogether.

I received the following from a staff member who for obvious reasons would like to remain anonymous.

[Quote]...' It has been an incredibly challenging time the past few months. We have been excluded from consultation on the decisions that have occurred. When we have tried to speak up for what is right I have felt bullied into submission unable to have a voice. Many of us are dependent on the City of Greater Geelong for future employment opportunities and it has been made clear in no uncertain terms that in standing up for what we think is right we are putting future job prospects at risk. ...'[end quote]

I have tried to encourage this staff member to be stay strong and be brave but I fear that the damage has already been done. But hopefully at the very least, I can be a voice for the voiceless. Given the magnitude of what has occurred during this process including bullying and willful misconduct; I implore the council to investigate this further as well as any other blatant disregard for due process that may have occurred.

I am also struggling to comprehend how council can claim that it has also satisfied all of its legal obligations, including conducting meaningful stakeholder engagement in light of such deplorable behavior.

Against that backdrop, it becomes even more critical to examine the legality and governance of the decision itself:

The decision of the creche closures is currently being shielded from public debate, using the label of 'operational matter.' This label is not only a reach; it raises serious questions about whether the decision has been appropriately classified within Council's governance framework and statutory obligations.

First, let us be clear on the law. Under Section 9 of the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic), the City of Greater Geelong is required to consider Gender Impact Assessments for policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant impact on the public. A crèche closure would very likely meet this threshold given its disproportionate impact on women's workforce participation and unpaid care responsibilities. Many of us have tried as have some of the councilors to ascertain whether this

assessment has been completed, with no clear answer given to date. If a required assessment has not been undertaken or properly considered, this raises a serious risk of non-compliance with obligations under Victorian Law.

Second, the administration's attempt to bypass the Chamber raises questions of consistency with Council's own Governance Rules, including Rule [3.46.3.1](#), which provides that matters affecting service levels are to be formally reported to Council when brought forward as a Council decision. Reducing a service level to zero, a service which has been in operation for over 44 years, represents the most extreme form of service change. To suggest this is a mere administrative adjustment is difficult to reconcile with the level of transparency and accountability expected under Council's governance framework.

Finally, the CEO's delegated authority is not a blank check. Under the S5 Instrument of Delegation, delegated powers must be exercised consistently with Council's adopted strategies and policies. We have policies committing to social infrastructure and community wellbeing; a unilateral closure raises serious questions about whether the exercise of delegation is consistent with those strategic commitments. Treating the abolition of a community service as a back-office management choice is a dangerous precedent. It risks undermining the Service Performance Principles of Section 106 of the Local Government Act 2020 and exposes this City to potential legal challenge, including judicial review or scrutiny from the Victorian Gender Equality Commission.

I urge the Councillors to exercise their oversight. Do not allow a procedural shortcut to become a permanent loss for Geelong families.

Question 1:

What safeguards were in place to ensure that staff consultation and internal feedback on this proposal were provided freely and without fear of reprisal, and what steps have been taken to independently verify that those processes met Council's standards of fair and meaningful engagement?

Question 2:

The Council has claimed usage of the service is approximately 7 per cent, a figure that I have yet to find anyone who can independently verify or reconcile with lived experience of the service. In practice, many users regularly report that they are unable to secure bookings due to the service being "fully booked", which raises questions about whether the stated usage figures accurately reflect demand or access constraints. On that basis, can Council provide the public with the methodology used to calculate the 7 per cent usage figure, given concerns that Council have made these figures intentionally misleading and not fully representative of actual service demand?

Executive Director City Life, Anthony Basford – Collective response to Questions 6 - 19.

Thank you, Mayor, and thank you to everyone for coming tonight, and asking questions on this issue.

I also want to highlight that I understand this is a challenging issue and that it affects some parents and carers in our community. I also acknowledge that it disproportionately affects women who are primary care givers.

I've read the questions, and I will respond to the key issues raised. I will be providing a single response given the number of questions and their similarity.

Firstly, I want to re-emphasise that this was not a Council decision - the role of the councillors is to set the longer-term strategic direction of the organisation including risk appetite and financial sustainability. The decision around creches was made by City officers at the operational level – in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020, this decision has been made under CEO delegation.

City officers are required to provide frank and fearless advice to the Council, and sometimes this obligation means making difficult decisions. The role of a City officer is to be impartial and review the evidence when making decisions. We understand that this decision is at odds with the expectations of some people in the community. However, it has been made for sound reasons, carefully considered prior to the decision.

There were five key reasons for the decision:

1. Changing regulatory compliance requirements
2. Low demand for the service
3. Financial sustainability
4. Providing creches is not the core business of Swim, Sport and Leisure; and
5. Strategic misalignment

When all of these factors are taken into consideration, the decision to discontinue the creche service is reasoned, responsible and strategically aligned.

There has been considerable commentary about the gender impact assessment, or GIA, which we undertook, and with it, some misunderstandings around the role of a GIA.

GIA's are internal working documents. Their role is to act as an analytical framework which supports the independent and evidence-based decision-making process of officers. They contain detailed evidence, internal data, risk considerations, sensitive workforce impacts and preliminary analysis.

Documents like this inform the final decision, but they are not in themselves the final policy or decision. As they contain considerable amounts of highly sensitive and commercial information, it is not standard practice to publish these, and that stance is consistent with the advice of the Victorian Gender Equality Commission for the Public Sector.

Instead, the Act requires that organisations demonstrate how gender impacts have been considered and addressed, which is met through the inclusion of GIA summaries, key findings and actions in Progress Reports submitted under the Gender Equality Act 2020.

So that it is on the record, we undertook a GIA during this process, and we provided it to Councillors yesterday. Here is what it found:

Data identifies that caregiving is unequally distributed and has gendered impacts – with women and gender-diverse carers more likely to depend on the service.

However, when balanced against the issues of financial unsustainability, declining demand, escalating regulatory and operational risk, and misalignment with the City's strategic objectives, the GIA supports the discontinuation of childcare services at SSL facilities.

I will now address the other issues which were raised in the questions:

Firstly, regarding the consideration of alternative options – we undertook this work throughout this process, but at the end of the day, no other option could ensure the adequate safety and supervision of children as required under the child safe standards, especially following recent government reforms. Other options explored included having an external operator provide services, and providing an unsupervised space within the gym/group exercise rooms, but the same issues with compliance and viability arose from these options.

On the issue of the physical and mental health outcomes for the community, this has been taken into consideration and we recognise that the creches provided benefits. However, when these positives were balanced against the other important considerations, including the increasingly complex regulatory and safety compliances, combined with early childhood education and care sector changes such as increased childcare subsidies and free three and four year old kinder, we see an increased cost in providing the creche and a reduced demand and usage of the service. Some questions have pointed to other businesses and how they operate this service – the decisions of other businesses and their appetite for risk is a matter for them and we can't comment.

Some questions addressed reallocating creche savings and putting them to broader healthcare: future healthcare expenditure is a matter for other levels of government and is not within the City's control. However, to provide some flexibility for families to explore other alternate care arrangements we are offering free 3-month membership and swimming lessons for any family who has enrolled in creche during 2026. We understand that this option does not address all challenges, especially for the few families who rely on the creche exclusively to be able to attend our facilities. That's why this is a challenging issue, and many factors had to be weighed up to make the final decision.

If for some reason you have not been contacted about these changes and your child has used the services this year, and we apologise if that is the case, please contact our Swim Sport and Leisure department via email on membershipssl@geelongcity.vic.gov.au.

On consultation, during our review of creche services, we undertook consultation with impacted employees, and feedback received from creche users has been considered. Feedback from users has been received via a petition, face to face feedback, emails/letters and engagement with social media, and this was included in the factors we considered in the decision-making process.

While this was an operational decision, and not one made by Council, Councillors were briefed at a Ward Councillor update on 17 February 2026 and Councillor Strategic Briefing on 7 April 2026.

Some questions implied that creche hadn't been marketed – the fact is that the creche offering for members has been heavily promoted in our centres, including on in-centre signage and TV screens and our website. We provide a tour for new members when they join, including the creche particularly if we're aware they have small children.

In terms of the budget, the 2026-27 budget is still under development and is expected to be put to Council for endorsement in June.

We've received invitations for Councillors to visit the creches – Councillors regularly visit community facilities and engage with community members and service users as part of their role. Councillors are free to accept any invitations based on their availability, interests and responsibilities.

Before we finish, I also want to correct some misinformation being circulated. The City has no current plans to exit the provision of long day care or kindergarten services, either under in house or external management models. In fact, we've recently expanded provision through the opening Biala Community Hub in Mt Duneed, and will open the Yirrama Community Hub in Charlemont in 2027 with more facilities in the future development pipeline.

To close, I want to end tonight by talking about our staff, some of whom have provided wonderful and professional care to children for decades. This decision is in no way a reflection of their dedication and commitment to families, children and the City.

Some of the commentary and conduct that we have seen in the community have been disappointing. Feedback is always welcome about decisions that we've made, and we've been open and upfront with explaining the reasons for this decision. Threats, abuse and other similar conduct are completely unacceptable, and we have zero tolerance for this type of behaviour towards our staff. Feedback and questions must be posed respectfully, and in turn, we will provide responses in a respectful way.

Thank you again for your interest and questions around this matter.

1.7. Petitions

1. Keep COGG creches open

Belinda White presented the petition on behalf of Elise Davey and the community. The petition calls on Council to explore alternative business/funding options in an effort to keep the Creche's open.

The petition contains approximately 306 signatures.

2. Differential Rates for Retirement Villages - Abervale Retirement Village

Silvana Benacchio presented the petition on behalf of the Abervale Retirement Village. The petition requests Council to consider applying a differential rate for retirement villages.

The petition has approximately 196 signatures.

3. Differential Rates for Kensington Hill Retirement Village

Maureen Walsh presented the petition on behalf of the Kensington Hill Retirement Village. The petition requests Council to consider applying a differential rate for retirement villages.

The petition has approximately 66 signatures.

4. Differential Rates for Geelong Grove Retirement Community

Ann Daniell presented the petition on behalf of the Geelong Grove Retirement Community. The petition requests Council to consider applying a differential rate for retirement villages.

The petition has approximately 145 signatures.

5. Differential Rates for Barwarre Gardens Retirement Village

Cr E Sinclair presented the petition on behalf of Ross McConaghy & Jan Noreika and the Barwarre Gardens Retirement Village. The petition requests Council to consider applying a differential rate for retirement villages.

The petition has approximately 145 signatures.

Submission

Mark, resident of Belmont, made a brief statement expressing his gratitude for the City of Geelong and the great potential for its future as a great city.

2. REPORTS

2.1. Draft Open Space Strategy

Source: Growth and Place
Interim Executive Director: Jacquie Randles

Purpose

1. To seek Council endorsement for Stage 2 community engagement on the draft Open Space Strategy (Strategy). Engagement will enable community feedback to refine the Strategy prior to adoption.

Background

2. Greater Geelong's population is forecast to grow by 47% over the next 20 years. There will be a significant need for high-quality open space to support new communities, maintain equitable access, and meet a diversity of user needs.
3. The City's first Open Space Strategy will guide future planning of the City's open space network, consistent with established best practice across State and Local Government.
4. The draft Strategy provides direction by:
 - 4.1. Setting long-term aspirations to guide the network over the next 10 years.
 - 4.2. Responding to population growth and wide-ranging community needs.
 - 4.3. Addressing inequities and gaps across the network to inform strategic acquisition and disposal of open space.
 - 4.4. Developing consistent standards to improve the quality of outcomes and set expectations for the community and our partners.
 - 4.5. Identifying and prioritising investment opportunities to create an accessible and equitable public space network.
5. Stage 1 community engagement (April – May 2025) established values, barriers and priorities. Outcomes from this engagement informed the development of the draft Strategy.

Key Matters

6. The draft Open Space Strategy:
 - 6.1. Outlines the aspiration for the City's open space network and defines how this aspiration will be achieved through evidence-based actions.
 - 6.2. Addresses the inequity between areas of the City. Growth areas benefit from new and well-planned open spaces, while many established areas have poorly located and not fit-for-purpose open spaces functioning below modern standards.

- 6.3. Highlights inequity in renewal and maintenance budgets stemming from greater upfront investment in new subdivisions and current like-for-like renewal approach of existing open space assets and recommends a more equitable and strategic approach to renewal and maintenance.
 - 6.4. Identifies the need to improve the management and spending of the Public Open Space Reserve Fund. An open space contributions review report will be developed.
 - 6.5. Recognises the need to review and restructure the network by acquiring land to address gaps, and repurposing or disposal of not fit-for-purpose open space to reinvest in improvements and priority areas and presents opportunities to address this for each area.
 - 6.6. Responds to the challenges by protecting, optimising and growing open space:
 - 6.6.1. Protecting: Safeguarding open space and preventing net loss.
 - 6.6.2. Optimising: Ensuring the network delivers maximum community benefit and that it is used and managed effectively and sustainably.
 - 6.6.3. Growing: Strategic expansion and upgrade of the network to address identified gaps.
 - 6.7. Sets contemporary standards informed by benchmarking against comparable Victorian councils and relevant State Government policy and guidance.
 - 6.8. Identifies actions to be delivered over the next 10 years through Council's Public Open Space Reserve Fund, developer contributions, renewals and capital works budgets, while others will rely on partnerships or external grant opportunities.
7. The final Strategy will replace the *Open Space Policy 2003* as the City's commitment to the provision and maintenance of open space for community needs. It is recommended that the Policy is revoked upon adoption of the final Strategy.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.1

Cr A Aitken moved, Cr E Kontelj seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Endorses the draft Open Space Strategy (Attachment 1) to be released for a four-week period of community consultation; and**
- 2. Notes a further report will be presented to Council following community consultation.**

Carried

Financial Sustainability

8. The draft Open Space Strategy strengthens the financial sustainability of the City by:
 - 8.1. Highlighting the need for best practice, transparent and sustainable management of the Public Open Space Reserve Fund.
 - 8.2. Identifying the need for the consolidation (repurpose or disposal) and acquisition of land for open space.
 - 8.3. Prioritising investment where it will deliver the greatest community benefit.
9. Future implementation will be staged, with funding to be considered through Council budgets process, developer contributions, and supported, where possible, by external grants and partnership opportunities.
10. Potential capital, operational and maintenance costs will be determined and refined during detail planning of individual projects.

Community Engagement

11. The draft Strategy was informed by Stage 1 community engagement (April – May 2025) which established the community's values, barriers and priorities.
12. Face-to-face engagement provided detailed insights from long-term residents and visitors, reinforcing community values and identifying opportunities for enhancement.
13. Targeted meetings and workshops included the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Youth Council, and the Victorian State Government.
14. Future engagement activities planned include a survey available on Have Your Say, drop-in sessions, pop-up at local events, and targeted engagement with key stakeholders.

Social Equity and Sustainability

15. The draft Strategy promotes:
 - 15.1. Inclusive and equitable access to public spaces, identifying gaps in the network.
 - 15.2. Improved public amenity and recreation opportunities.
 - 15.3. Support for a sustainable local economy.

Gender Equality – Gender+ Impact Assessment

16. The assessment has informed the draft Open Space Strategy by embedding a multi-use approach to open space planning, guiding equitable investment towards areas of greatest need to support fair outcomes for people of all genders and backgrounds. The strategy promotes open spaces near community hubs supporting women in caregiving roles, and sets standards to ensure open space is well located for passive surveillance and safety.

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

17. The draft strategy aligns with key local policy commitments:

- 17.1. Clever and Creative Future (2017).
- 17.2. Council Plan (2025-2029).
- 17.3. Urban Forest Strategy (2015-2025).
- 17.4. Environment Strategy (2020- 2030).
- 17.5. Precinct Structure Plans, Structure Plans and Framework Plans (completed and current).
- 17.6. Open Space for Everyone, Victorian Government (2021).
- 17.7. Plan for Victoria, Victorian Government (2025).
- 17.8. Guide for Open Space Strategies, Victorian Government (2025).

Alignment to Council Plan and Vision

18. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic priority:
Core and Critical Infrastructure

19. This report aligns with the Community led 30-year Vision, “Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future” community aspiration:

An inclusive, diverse, healthy and socially connected community.
Development and implementation of sustainable solutions.
Sustainable development that supports population growth and protects the natural environment.

Conflict of Interest

20. No officer involved in the preparation of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Risk Assessment and Risk Appetite Statement

- 21. The draft Open Space Strategy is a key instrument to mitigate Council’s strategic risk “Municipal Growth & Infrastructure – Critical infrastructure and urban spaces across Geelong are unsustainable or fail to satisfy the needs of the growing municipality.” Endorsement to commence community engagement on the draft will actively participate to mitigate this strategic risk.
- 22. The Strategy aligns with Council’s balanced appetite for managing risks related to asset management as it aims to strengthen and optimise the open space asset portfolio by improving the portfolio sustainability rather than preserving assets without strategic benefit.
- 23. The Strategy aligns with Council’s balanced appetite for equitable resource allocation and service deliver for the community as it supports fair and equitable access to open space across diverse community groups by allocating resources in a way that meaningfully addresses community needs.

24. Council has a cautious appetite for financial risk and tolerates some risks to innovatively manage its property portfolio where there is long-term financial benefit. The development of an acquisition and disposal plan, as a key action from the Strategy, is justified by long-term value gained by improved property portfolio outcomes, and the scale of investment is proportionate to community value and financial return.
25. Council has no appetite for risks that result in material non-compliance of legislation or regulatory requirements. The Strategy aims to mitigate a current risk exposure by improving the management and spending of the Public Open Space Reserve Fund in accordance with the *Subdivision Act 1988*. The Strategy is a progress towards legislative compliance and supporting strong governance of this fund.

Environmental Sustainability

26. The draft Strategy embeds improved access to nature, climate adaptation, and objectives to meet 30% canopy coverage targets. They promote urban cooling and biodiversity enhancement, while protecting conservation values.

Attachments

1. Draft Open Space Strategy - March 2026 [2.1.1 - 60 pages]

Cr E Sinclair left the meeting at 7.39pm.

2.2. Gully Road, Ceres - Finalisation of Special Rate and Charge Scheme SRC 368

Source: City Infrastructure

Executive Director: James Stirton

Purpose

1. For Council to approve the finalisation of Special Charge Scheme 368 for road construction in Gully Road, Ceres.

Background

2. Council resolved its Intention to Declare the Special Charge at its meeting 28 May 2024 and declared the Special Charge Scheme at its meeting 10 December 2024.
3. The works included road construction and sealing the road. Please refer to **Attachment 1 – Map**.
4. Nine properties benefitted from this road upgrade.
5. The project costs were declared at \$261,936.00. Property owners were asked to contribute \$130,968.00 (50%) based on the apportionment of cost and the City committed \$130,968.00. The special benefit cost apportionments are shown in **Attachment 2 – Schedule A**.

Key Matters

6. The scheme works are now complete as shown in **Attachment 3 – photos**.
7. The total scheme cost was estimated to cost \$261,936.00. The actual cost was \$260,476.85, a decrease of 0.5%.
8. Properties contributing to a charge are eligible for a reduction in the declared charge based on final costs being less than the estimate.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.2

Cr R Nelson moved, Cr A Katos seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Approve the final costs for Special Charge Scheme for Gully Road, Ceres SRC 368; and**
- 2. Instruct the Chief Executive Officer to adjust the special charge and notify the property owners as shown in Attachment 2, as required by Section 166 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.**

Carried

Financial Sustainability

9. With the scheme now complete, the total actual cost of \$260,476.85 is a 0.5% decrease from the initial estimate at Declaration of \$261,936.00 and includes:
 - 9.1. Property owner special benefit contributions totalling \$130,238.42 (\$729.58 lower than the estimated amount). Property owners will be refunded as share of the \$729.58 variance to align their contribution to actual costs.
10. The Special Charge Scheme can be finalised based on the actual construction cost as shown in **Attachment 4 – Schedule C – Special charge**.
11. The final design and construction costs are summarised below:

	Estimate	Actual	Variance	Variance (%)
Scheme cost to owners	\$130,968.00	\$130,238.42	\$729.58	0.5%
Scheme cost to the City	\$130,968.00	\$130,238.42	\$729.58	0.5%
Scheme total	\$261,936.00	\$260,476.85	\$1,459.16	

Community Engagement

12. Levy notices were sent to property owners 11 December 2024.
13. No submissions were received at VCAT. Property owners were informed on 23 January 2025.
14. Letter sent to property owners 23 June 2025 to advise of contractor chosen for the works.
15. Contractor letter given to all properties 11 July 2025 to advise of works timeline and what to expect.

Social Equity and Sustainability

16. The provision of properly sealed and drained roads provides improved amenity, connectivity, safety for pedestrians and reduced environment impacts.

Gender Equality – Gender+ Impact Assessment

17. A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) was not undertaken for this report as it does not meet the requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020. The report does not involve new or reviewed policies, programs or services, and it does not have a direct or significant impact on the public.

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

18. The scheme has been prepared in accordance with the Special Rate and Charge provisions of the Local Government Act 1989, consultation provisions of the Local Government Act 2020 and guided by Council's Special Rates and Charge Policy (2021). The process chart for the implementation of this scheme is shown in **Attachment 4 – scheme process**.

19. In accordance with Council's Special Rates and Charges Policy, with the works completed and all costs aggregated, the next step is for Council to finalise the scheme. Cost adjustments are in accordance with requirements of the Local Government Act 1989.

Alignment to Council Plan and Vision

20. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic priority:
Core and Critical Infrastructure
21. This report aligns with the Community led 30-year Vision, "Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future" community aspiration:
A fast, reliable and connected transport network.

Conflict of Interest

22. No officer involved in the preparation of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Risk Assessment and Risk Appetite Statement

23. Council has a cautious appetite for risks that compromise statutory and governance obligations throughout the full lifecycle of a Special Rate and Charge Scheme, from the Intention to Declare stage through to Declaration and Finalisation, ensuring strict adherence to notice, benefit ratio and transparency requirements under the Local Government Act 1989 and the broader governance principles of the Local Government Act 2020.
24. As a result, it is recommended that Council progresses this scheme given it delivers a clear special benefit to the affected properties while managing funding constraints, reflecting the purpose and operation of Special Rates and Charges as described in the City's Special Rates and Charges framework. Across all three reporting stages, Council accepts a manageable level of stakeholder variation and property owner feedback, provided overall support remains sufficient and hardship considerations are addressed responsibly in accordance with Ministerial hardship guidelines.

Environmental Sustainability

25. The new sealed road provides improved sealed access and amenity as dust, mud and stormwater concerns are mitigated.
26. No significant vegetation removal was required to complete the project. No natural habitats were affected.

Attachments

1. Attachment 1 Plan Gully Road Ceres SRC368 Finalisation of scheme D26 64316 [2.2.1 - 1 page]
2. Attachment 2 Schedule A Cost Estimate Gully Road Ceres SRC368 Finalisation of scheme (1) [2.2.2 - 1 page]
3. Attachment 3 Photos Special Charge scheme Gully Road Ceres SRC368 Finalisation of scheme [2.2.3 - 1 page]
4. Attachment 4 Schedule C Special charge Gully Road Ceres SRC368 Finalisation of scheme D26 [2.2.4 - 1 page]
5. Attachment 5 Scheme Process Gully Road Ceres SRC368 Finalisation of scheme D26 64681 [2.2.5 - 1 page]

Cr E Sinclair returned to the meeting at 7.41pm.

2.3. Proposed road discontinuance and transfer of land - Part Purrumbete Avenue, Manifold Heights

Source: Office of the Chief Executive
Acting Chief Executive Officer: Troy Edwards

Purpose

1. To advise Council of the outcome from the community engagement relating to the proposed road discontinuance and transfer of the land of part of Purrumbete Avenue, Manifold Heights to the Department of Education as shown in Attachment 1.

Background

2. Manifold Heights Primary School is located on either side of a section of Purrumbete Avenue.
3. The southern end of Purrumbete Avenue is fenced, with school playground equipment on it and it is being used by the school community.
4. Council approved the commencement of the statutory process in accordance with section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and its Community Engagement Policy at the Council meeting on 25 November 2025.

Key Matters

5. Community engagement on the proposed discontinuance and transfer of part of Purrumbete Avenue was published on the City's Have Your Say platform from 28 November 2025 to 26 December 2025, with two submissions received and both submitters not requesting to be heard.
6. One submission was in support of the proposed road discontinuance and transfer of land to the Department of Education, the other submission recommended public pedestrian access via a foot path from Purrumbete Avenue through to Manifold Street be accessible outside of school hours.
7. A subsequent public notice was published in the City News on the 6 February 2026 with no submissions received.
8. If the road is discontinued, the land will be transferred and consolidated with the Department of Education land surrounding part of Purrumbete Avenue. The transfer will allow for future development of Manifold Heights Primary School, in addition to the existing playground use.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.3

Cr E Kontelj moved, Cr C Burson seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Notes the outcome of the community engagement process in accordance with Section 233 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and the City's Community Engagement Policy;**
- 2. Approves the road discontinuance and transfer of approximately 1,184m² of part Purrumbete Avenue, Manifold Heights;**
- 3. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to publish a notice in the Victorian Government Gazette detailing the road discontinuance; and**
- 4. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to sign documents to complete the transfer of land in accordance with section 116 of the *Local Government Act 2020*.**

Carried

Financial Sustainability

9. The City will be reimbursed for all legal and marketing costs incurred for the road discontinuance and transfer of the land by the Department of Education.

Community Engagement

10. Community engagement was undertaken by publishing a notice on the Geelong Australia website via Have Your Say from 28 November 2025 to 26 December 2025.
11. Submissions were invited and two submissions were received.
12. One submission was in support of the proposed road discontinuance and transfer of land to the Department of Education, the other submission recommended public pedestrian access via a foot path from Purrumbete Avenue through to Manifold Street be accessible outside of school hours.
13. A further public notice was published in the City News on the 6 February 2026 with no submissions received.

Social Equity and Sustainability

14. There are no social equity and sustainability implications created by the recommendation to discontinue part of Purrumbete Avenue and transferring the land.
15. Providing the land to the Department of Education will enable the primary school to continue to plan for and deliver its service to the local community.

Gender Equality – Gender+ Impact Assessment

16. An assessment was not completed on the proposed sale of the land as it does not relate to the criteria of when an assessment is required, being an existing or developing service, program or policy.

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

17. Council has complied with Section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* by undertaking community engagement and inviting submissions.
18. Council has the authority to discontinue a road under Clause 3 of Schedule 10 of the *Local Government Act 1989* and by notice published in the Victorian Government Gazette.
19. Section 116 of the *Local Government Act 2020* applies to the transfer of land.

Alignment to Council Plan and Vision

20. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic priority:
Governance and Integrity
21. This report aligns with the Community led 30-year Vision, “Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future” community aspiration:
Development and implementation of sustainable solutions.

Conflict of Interest

22. No officer involved in the preparation of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Risk Assessment and Risk Appetite Statement

23. The proposed road discontinuance and transfer of part of Purrumbete Avenue, Manifold Heights aligns with Council's Risk Appetite Statement by enabling efficient land use through a compliant, transparent statutory process, while maintaining low financial, operational and community risk and strong governance controls. The proposal does not materially reduce public access or service delivery. The level of community impact and objection is low and has been properly tested, aligning with Council's *balanced* community appetite and *cautious* appetite for transparent decision-making.
24. The Manifold Heights Primary School is occupying the land for its purposes and wants to further develop the land to meet its needs. The Department of Education has approached the City to assist in rectifying the encroachment for a permanent solution with ongoing appropriate management of the land.

Environmental Sustainability

25. There are no environmental implications to this proposal.

Attachments

1. Purrumbete Ave, Manifold Heights [2.3.1 - 1 page]
2. Purrumbete Ave, Manifold Heights - Aerial [2.3.2 - 1 page]

2.4. Councillor Appointments to Committees

Source: Corporate Services
Acting Executive Director: Monica Thomson

Purpose

1. To adopt the amendments to Councillor Committee appointments (**Attachment 1**).

Background

2. In accordance with section 63 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act), Council must appoint at least two Councillors as committee members to a Delegated Committee, one of which must be appointed by the Mayor or Council as Chair.
3. In accordance with section 65 of the Act, Council can appoint as many members as considered necessary to the Community Asset Committee. The Bellarine Arts Centre Community Asset Committee (Potato Shed) - Terms of Reference reflect the Joint User Agreement which states that the committee will consist of two representatives of Council (one of which is a Councillor as Chair).
4. The Mayor retains overall responsibility as spokesperson for the Council as required by the Act.
5. On 18 November 2024 Councillors were formally sworn into office and commenced the new Councillor term.
6. On 10 December 2024 Council resolved to appoint Councillors to the position of Chair and Deputy Chair for relevant committees and appointed Councillors to various Committees.

Key Matters

7. Following the election of a new Deputy Mayor on 3 March 2026 the need for amendments and alignment has arisen.
8. Considering the importance of maintaining consistency with the Mayoral term, the review date of the appointments will remain unchanged, as November 2026.
9. The alignment of advisory committees with the Council Plan is critical, as it provides a clear strategic framework, guides decision-making, and ensures that committee activities effectively support Council priorities and community outcomes.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.4

Cr E Sinclair moved, Cr R Story seconded -

That Council approves the amendments to the Councillor Committee appointments (Attachment 1).

Carried

Financial Sustainability

10. Implementing the new Council Plan aligned committees is expected to reduce resource requirements and associated costs of committee management, while not adopting the model may result in ongoing financial impacts due to inefficiencies and duplicated effort.

Community Engagement

11. The appointments to Advisory Committees are considered effective mechanisms for ensuring Council remains aware of community needs and priorities.
12. Chairs, Deputy Chairs, and Councillor representatives on Advisory Committees provide an important link between the community and Council, particularly on matters of strategic focus. These appointments strengthen community engagement, support informed decision-making, and help ensure that diverse perspectives are reflected in Council's work.
13. Outcomes of the amended Councillor appointments will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Social Equity and Sustainability

14. The amendments ensure Council's alignment to existing terms of reference documents, which enables Council to respond to social needs through targeted Advisory Committees reference groups.

Gender Equality – Gender+ Impact Assessment

15. A Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) was not undertaken for this report as it does not meet the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*. The report does not involve new or reviewed policies, programs or services.

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

16. Sections 63 and 65 of the Act allow for the appointment of Councillors to Delegated Committees and Community Asset Committees.

Alignment to Council Plan and Vision

17. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic priority:
Governance and Integrity
18. This report aligns with the Community led 30-year Vision, "Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future" community aspiration:
Development and implementation of sustainable solutions.

Conflict of Interest

19. No officer involved in the preparation of this report declared a general or material conflict of interest.

Risk Assessment and Risk Appetite Statement

20. There are no risk assessments or considerations arising from this report.

21. Council has a cautious appetite for regulatory, legal and governance requirements. The recommendation of this report aligns with Council's risk appetite statement as it reflects transparency, accountability and protects public trust while aligning with Council policies and decision-making frameworks.

Environmental Sustainability

22. The adoption of the changes supports the Council's ongoing commitments to environmental objectives.

Attachments

1. Councillor Appointments to Committees April 2026 [2.4.1 - 2 pages]

3. RECORD OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS

Source: Corporate Services
Acting Executive Director: Monica Thomson

Summary

1. The Governance Rules of the City of Greater Geelong require the tabling of records of informal meetings of Councillors at the next convenient Council meeting and that their record be included in the minutes of that Council meeting.
2. A summary of the informal meetings of Councillors is attached.

RESOLUTION - Item 3.1

Cr E Kontelj moved, Cr E Sinclair seconded -

That Council receive the summary of the informal meetings of Councillors for the period to 28 April 2026.

Carried

4. CONFIDENTIAL

Council will close the meeting to the public in accordance with the provision of section 66(2) of the *Local Government Act 2020* to consider the following list of items.

4.1. CEO Employment and Remuneration Matter (Confidential)

CONFIDENTIAL

RESOLUTION - Item 4.1

Cr E Sinclair moved, Cr R Nelson seconded -

That Council consider this report at the conclusion of the meeting as it is designated confidential by the Chief Executive Officer pursuant to sections 3(1) and 66 of the Local Government Act 2020, the information contained in this report is confidential because it contains personal information that would if released result in the unreasonable disclosure of information about personal affairs. This section is applicable because it relates to the Chief Executive Officer's personal affairs.

Carried

4.2. Audit and Risk Committee Minutes - 12 March 2026 (Confidential)

CONFIDENTIAL

RESOLUTION - Item 4.2

Cr E Wilkinson moved, Cr R Story seconded -

That Council consider this report at the conclusion of the meeting as it is designated confidential by the Chief Executive Officer pursuant to sections 3(1) and 66 of the Local Government Act 2020, the information contained in this report is confidential because it contains Council business information being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations. This section is applicable because of the nature of matters routinely considered by the Audit & Risk Committee, including risk management, financial management, audit information, fraud and corruption controls, complaints handling, legal matters, integrity, privacy and FOI matters, where premature or inappropriate disclosure could prejudice Council's interests, compromise investigations or controls, or result in unreasonable disclosure of personal or commercially sensitive information.

Carried

4.3. Strategic Property Acquisition (Confidential)

CONFIDENTIAL

RESOLUTION - Item 4.3

Cr C Burson moved, Cr A Katos seconded -

That Council consider this report at the conclusion of the meeting as it is designated confidential by the Chief Executive Officer pursuant to sections 3(1) and 66 of the Local Government Act 2020, the information contained in this report is confidential because it contains Council business information being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations. This section is applicable as the proposed purchase of land is subject to contracts being executed.

Carried

5. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting was closed to the public at 7.47pm.

RESOLUTION

Cr E Wilkinson moved, Cr E Kontelj seconded –

That the meeting be re-opened to the public.

Carried.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 7.59pm on Tuesday 28 April 2026.

Signed: _____

Cr Stretch Kontelj (Mayor)

Date: _____