

MINUTES

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 28 July 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: A Basford (Acting Chief Executive Officer), T Edwards (Executive Director, Corporate Services), J Randles (Executive Director, Growth & Place), A Bedggood (Acting Executive Director, City Infrastructure), A Higgs (Acting Executive Director City Life), A Martin (Chief Governance and Risk Officer), S Beck (Manager Council & Corporate Governance), Luke Voogt (Senior Corporate Communications Officer - Mayor & Councillor Support), T Booth (Acting Governance Officer).

Opening: The Mayor declared the meeting open at 6.00pm.

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 Kontelj moved, Cr E Sinclair seconded –

That Leave of Absence be granted to Cr R Nelson from 30 July to 9 August 2026, inclusive.

Carried

RESOLUTION – Item 1.3.2

Cr R Story moved, Cr A Katos seconded –

That Leave of Absence be granted to Cr E Wilkinson from 17 August to 21 August 2026, inclusive.

Carried

1.4. Declarations of Conflicts of Interest

NIL

1.5. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLUTION - Item 1.5.1

Cr R Nelson moved, Cr E Sinclair seconded -

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23 June 2026 be confirmed.

Carried

1.6. Public Question and Submission Time

Cr E Kontelj left the Chamber at 6:26pm during discussion on item 1.6 and returned at 6:28pm.

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:

- Kelli Lavelle – Transport
- Daniel Robertson – Traffic Management
- Dr. David Pavia – Fyansford Landfill
- Vanessa Whitem – Pest Animal Numbers
- Peter Clapinski – Historical Reserve Designation

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:

- Jeanne Nel – Urban Forest Strategy

SUBMITTER 1. KELLI LAVELLE

Subject: TRANSPORT

Relevant City Department: Growth & Place

Question 1:

Thank you for taking my questions tonight and I am here as a member of Better Streets Geelong.

The redevelopment of the South Geelong train station has led to the renamed Jubilee street and Amphlett Way becoming one-way streets, with vehicles now travelling at 40km/hour. A wide pedestrian/cycle path has been created which connects the station to Kardinia Park, the Bellarine rail trail, the city, the river, the waterfront, and Waurn Ponds. All these paths are off road and safe to walk and cycle.

As a local resident, I have witnessed so many more people using this path for running, walking and cycling. A clear case of build it and they will come.

COGG commenced community engagement of the Integrated Transport Strategy in 2024 and I have participated in all phases of the engagement. Your website indicates phase 4 of the draft strategy and community consultation will be open in early 2026 and the final strategy will be adopted in mid 2026.

Given that we are now approaching the end of July, my first question tonight is when will phase 4 of the ITS be open, and when will the final strategy be adopted by council?

Question 1 Response:

Thank you for your question Kelli.

The Draft Integrated Transport Strategy is currently being finalised and is expected to be presented to Council in September seeking approval to undertake community consultation. Subject to Council's consideration, community consultation will commence shortly afterwards. Following consultation, community feedback will be reviewed and used to inform any refinements before the strategy is presented back to Council for consideration and potential adoption in late 2026 or early 2027.

Question 2:

The Victorian state government and other LGAs are aiming for 25% of trips to be made by active transport by 2030. The Federal Government has funding available for projects as part of the Victorian Active Transport fund. Unfortunately, I cannot see any projects being funded in Geelong with this federal money and would be happy to know if COGG has applied for funding for local projects.

Bicycle Network is running a campaign asking the Victorian state government for a commitment of 5 % of the transport budget to be allocated to walking and cycling infrastructure. The United Nations recommends 20% of transport budgets be dedicated to active transport.

Question 2 response:

The City has applied for funding opportunities through the Black Spot program in the past financial year, allowing for the design of improvements at several intersections across Geelong, East Geelong and Marshall, with the infrastructure to be delivered in the future. These projects will support a safer, slower road network with improved safety prioritised in their designs.

The City recognises the important role that walking and riding infrastructure plays in creating connected, healthy and accessible communities. We are supportive of any additional funding that will lead to better active travel outcomes for the State and our region. The City will continue to work with State and Federal governments to advocate for funding that addresses local transport needs and supports a balanced and integrated transport network.

We recognise the important role that walking and riding infrastructure plays in creating connected, healthy and accessible communities. We are supportive of any additional funding that will lead to better active travel outcomes for the State and our region. The City will continue to work with State and Federal governments to advocate for funding that addresses local transport needs and supports a balanced and integrated transport network.

SUBMITTER 2. DANIEL ROBERTSON**Subject: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT****Relevant City Department: City Infrastructure****Question 1:**

Firstly, I want to raise an issue regarding the intersection at South Valley Rd, Porter Ave, and Bonsey Rd in Highton. I have noticed as drivers approach the intersection some appear to significantly slow down from the 60 km/h speed limit. This presents a hazard to other drivers and pedestrians. Drivers who slow down may be doing so because it reasonably appears to them as a built-up area. There is also increased pedestrian traffic, particularly schoolchildren crossing the road walking to the local pre and primary schools. Many do not use the school crossing further north at the Kennedy Grove intersection. There is an electronic, variable speed limit in the area, however it is approximately 70 metres north of the intersection. So even during school times, the speed limit is still 60 km/h through there. I have had the unfortunate experience of a child stepping out onto the road in front of me there and needing to brake hard to avoid hitting them. While I recognise South Valley Rd is classified as an arterial road and therefore within the jurisdiction of the State Government, local governments have significant advocacy power. I therefore ask Council for its view on the safety of this intersection, and if it will commit to making a submission to the Department of Transport and Planning to lower the speed limit.

Question 1 Response:

Thank you for your question Daniel.

The City has received community feedback from residents expressing concerns regarding safety, congestion and the operation of the intersection, particularly during peak travel periods.

In response to this community feedback and the growing demands on the local road network, the City is advocating to the Department of Transport and Planning to undertake a detailed assessment of the intersection and consider appropriate safety and capacity improvements.

Question 2:

Secondly, regarding the Queen's Park Bridge, it is becoming increasingly apparent the current voluntary yield system is not effective at managing the flow of traffic. Currently, there is a non-standard informational sign on both sides of the bridge asking drivers to give way to waiting vehicles. Many do not. When drivers do not yield, traffic subsequently banks up further on the opposing side. During peak times, traffic will bank up 350 metres past Melville Ave on the Newtown side, and well past the golf course turn-off on the Highton side. The issue is further compounded given that drivers on the Highton side have an obstructed view of the bridge. Most weeks I go fishing beside the bridge, so I have a first-hand view of what occurs. There are often moments where vehicles from opposing sides will attempt to cross simultaneously. Drivers must then precariously reverse along the narrow bridge. I occasionally see broken glass on the road and the footpath below which I suspect is due to this. But there are also occasionally standoffs between drivers. On one occasion I witnessed and recorded a video of two drivers stopped on the bridge, one of whom exited their vehicle, verbally abusing each other over who had the right-of-way. Further pressure has been put on the bridge with the population increase of nearby suburbs in and around the Barrabool Hills area.

Residents who live there understandably will not go out of their way to use the bridge between Shannon Ave and Barrabool Rd to cross the Barwon River. Data from the Department of Transport and Planning reveals that in 2019 an estimated 3,936 vehicles crossed the bridge each day. Although I was unable to find more recent data, extrapolating what is available reveals the current traffic volume is likely more than 4,800 vehicles per day. This may mean the single-lane bridge no longer complies with road traffic capacity guidelines and standards. Despite the bridge being within the purview of the State Government, Council is responsible for the residential growth which is contributing to the traffic volume and the subsequent issues. I therefore ask Council for its view on traffic management across the bridge, and if it will commit to making a submission to the Department to initiate a review to improve it. I would suggest installing traffic lights.

Question 2 Response:

Thanks for your second question Daniel.

As the Queen's Park Bridge forms part of the arterial road network managed by the Department of Transport and Planning, decisions regarding traffic management measures, operational changes and potential infrastructure upgrades are the responsibility of the State Government.

In response to the concerns raised, the City will write to the Department of Transport and Planning to advocate for a review of the bridge and its current traffic management arrangements, including consideration of traffic volumes, safety, operational performance and any potential improvement opportunities.

SUBMITTER 3. DR DAVID PAVIA**Subject: FYANSFORD LANDFILL****Relevant City Department: Growth & Place****Question 1:**

My wife and I have obtained a planning permit to build a new home at 55 Lower Paper Mills Road, Fyansford, adjacent to the Southeast corner of the Fyansford Landfill. We currently live next door at 65 Lower Paper Mills Road and are aware of the history of the landfill. We must shortly decide whether to enter into a building contract to build our new home and commit to a substantial financial investment. That decision depends on understanding the future operation of the landfill and the planning controls that apply to the site. Question 1 What evidence has Council relied upon to conclude that existing use rights extend to the southeast corner of the landfill, given that the land comprises separate titles and historical aerial photography appears to show little or no landfill activity there for many years? In *Wellington & Ors v Surf Coast SC* [2011] VCAT 2317, the Tribunal found that existing use rights extended only to those lots supported by sufficient evidence of continuous use. How does Council distinguish its position from that decision, and has it obtained any formal planning or legal advice on this issue?

Question 1 Response:

Thank you David for your questions.

Council has considered whether existing use rights extend to the southeast corner of the land and has formed the view that the existing use rights extend to the southeast corner.

In doing so, Council considered historical approvals for the landfill (such as Planning Permit 837, Works Approvals and Licences issued by the Environment Protection Authority), the provisions of the planning scheme and available information regarding landfill operations.

Council has formed the view that the site operates as one integrated area for the purpose of a landfill.

Question 2:

Given that the Landfill operators own website states "Once a landfill, the site is now evolving into a state-of-the-art recovery and sorting facility that processes more than 150 tonnes of material per day." What is Council's current understanding of the future operation of the Fyansford Landfill, including any intention to recommence waste picking, expand waste transfer or recycling activities, or utilise the southeast corner for landfill or associated operations? What planning approvals and compliance processes would be required before any such activities could lawfully commence?

Question 2 Response:

The landowner has not informed Council of its future intentions after landfill operations cease. Landfill operations, including in the southeast corner, are lawful and can continue. Once operations cease the owner has responsibilities to rehabilitate the land. We also note the City has received separate correspondence from yourself over the weekend which will also be responded to.

SUBMITTER 4. VANESSA WHITEM

Subject: PEST ANIMAL NUMBERS

Relevant City Department: City Infrastructure

Question 1:

I note that the City of Greater Geelong Plan for Nature is to be approved at tonight's Council meeting. In the City of Greater Geelong Draft Plan for Nature, Under Goal 3: Connections and Restoration, the 10 year targets include: Pest animal numbers reduced within City managed reserves and roadsides. Under the Action Plan in the Draft Plan for Nature, the only Action listed for the next 2 years regarding pest animals is: 27) Review and expand the Rabbit Action Plan to include other pest animals such as foxes, deer and feral cats. My questions: 1) What is the current estimate of pest animal numbers (rabbits, foxes, feral cats and deer) on City managed reserves and roadsides?

Question 1 Response

Thank you for your question Vanessa.

The City does not currently hold definitive pest animal population numbers across Council managed reserves and roadsides.

Most pest animal management focuses on rabbits, with control programs delivered in line with the Rabbit Control Plan 2021–2026. Rabbit populations are monitored before and after control programs using spotlight surveys, and drone surveys have recently been trialled.

The City has also recently commenced a deer control program at Sparrovale Wetlands – Ngubitj Yoorree. Baseline population data of 150 Fellow Deer was established through a Parks Victoria study of the Connewarre Complex prior to the commencement of control activities. All deer removed through the program are recorded. In 2027 the City will initiate discussions with Parks Victoria to undertake another mapping exercise to measure deer numbers to determine whether our baseline data has changed.

Question 2:

How did the City calculate these numbers?

Question 2 Response:

The data for deer numbers was provided by Parks Victoria.

The Geelong Plan for Nature 2026-2036 action will enable the City to review our pest animal management program and incorporate new species such as Indian Myna. It will also allow us to review our monitoring and reporting program to measure the effectiveness of control activities and better understand their impact.

SUBMITTER 5. PETER CLAPINSKI

Subject: HISTORICAL RESERVE DESIGNATION

Relevant City Department: Growth & Place

Question 1:

Application Number: PP-416-2026 Address: 168-176 Portarlington Road Newcomb The City recently legislated and acquired ownership of a 1 272 square meter strip of land on the corner of Portarlington Road and Coppards Road Newcomb. This land is currently a designated Tree Planting Reserve. Given the Council has an urban tree strategy, and will vote on a plan that better protects Nature, it is incongruous that Statutory Planning has surreptitiously applied to remove the existing designation with a resulting loss of a rare urban green space. 1. What is the rationale for the Statutory Planning Department's internal application to remove the Tree Planting Reserve?

Question 1 Response:

Thank you for your question, Peter.

The application lodged by the City's Property Unit and currently under assessment by the City's Statutory Planning Unit seeks to remove a historical "Plantation Reserve" designation contained within the Plan of Subdivision under the Subdivision Act 1988 for land at 166-176 Portarlington Road, Newcomb. The application remains under consideration, and no decision has been made.

The rationale for the application is to ensure that historical subdivision controls are reviewed against the contemporary planning and statutory framework applying to the land. The land is zoned Low Density Residential and is not zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone.

The planning application relates only to the historical reserve designation and does not itself determine the future use of the land. Any future decision regarding the land would be subject to separate consideration and any applicable legislative and public consultation requirements.

Question 2:

What are the benefits to the community and to the environment of removing the existing designation?

Question 2 Response:

The application itself is not proposing any physical change to the land, removal of vegetation, development, or alteration of public access. Its purpose is to clarify the land's historical designation and ensure future decisions, if any, can be considered through the appropriate legislative and public consultation processes.

SUBMITTER 6. JEANNE NEL

Subject: URBAN FOREST STRATEGY

Relevant City Department: Growth & Place

Question 1:

Congratulations on completing the Draft Urban Forest Strategy: Healthy Country 2026-2036 with a view to public consultation. The Strategy relies on underlying research and associated reports. QUESTION: Can the Council confirm that any research and reports that the Strategy relies on will be made available prior to the four-week period of community consultation? In particular, will the research and reports be included in the material published on the Have Your Say page for the consultation?

Question 1 Response:

Public consultation is expected to begin in early August 2026. The Have Your Say page will include the Draft Strategy and the supporting documents that informed its development, where these can be publicly released, thank you for this suggestion.

This information will be available for the community to read and consider when providing feedback during the consultation period.

1.7. Petitions

1. Child Protection Overlay

Dr. Darryl Ridley presented a petition on behalf of residents.

The petition requests that Council:

- Formally support the introduction of a Child Protection Safety Overlay within the Victorian Planning Provisions;
- Write to the Minister for Planning expressing Council's support for the introduction of this overlay into Clause 45 of the Victorian Planning Provisions;
- Apply, or support the application of, the overlay to all land within the Commercial 1 Zone located within 200 metres of any school in the municipality; and
- Support the alignment of planning controls for sex services premises with the current planning controls applying to sex product shops.

The petition has approximately 519 signatures.

2. REPORTS

2.1. Environment Strategy Highlights Report 2025 - 26

Source: Growth & Place
Interim Executive Director: Jacqueline Randles

Purpose

1. To celebrate and highlight the City's substantial achievements and positive momentum in delivering the Environment Strategy 2020-30. The report demonstrates strong progress across a broad range of environmental priorities, including significant reductions in corporate carbon emissions, expanded community greening, restoration of key waterways, support for the circular economy, strengthened sustainable development outcomes, and continued community participation in household electrification.

Background

2. The Environment Strategy 2020-30 was adopted by Council on 8 September 2020.
3. The Environment Strategy 2020-30 established 5 goals:
 - 3.1. Become a zero-emission climate ready City;
 - 3.2. Create Greener Community Spaces;
 - 3.3. Contribute to a circular economy by reducing waste;
 - 3.4. Protect, enhance and restore our regions biodiversity; and
4. Achieve better integrated water management through planning and design.
5. The Environment Strategy Action Plan 2024-26 sets out the actions to achieve the Environment Strategy 2020-30 goals. The Environment Strategy Highlights Report 2025-26 at Attachment 1 celebrates the significant achievements delivered during the 2025-26 financial year and highlights the City's continued leadership and momentum in improving environmental outcomes for the region.

Key Matters

6. The Environment Strategy 2020-30 guides planning and decision making to improve the health of the local environment, reduce our environmental footprint, and protect the lifestyle our community enjoys.
7. A review of the 81 actions within the Environment Strategy Action Plan 2024-26 found that 48% were completed, 40% were on track, and 12% required improvement.
8. Key environmental sustainability outcomes and achievements delivered under the Environment Strategy Action Plan 2024-26 and detailed in the Environment Strategy Highlights Report 2025-26 at Attachment 1 include:

- 8.1. Continued reduction in the City's corporate carbon emissions (reduced by 41% since 2019), with measures including street lighting upgrades, solar installations and the purchase of renewable energy, delivering an estimated \$900,000 in annual savings.
- 8.2. Increased greening of community spaces via:
 - 8.2.1. The introduction of updated Nature Strip Landscaping Guidelines in 2026; and
 - 8.2.2. Our Environment Partnership Grant Programs, which has resulted in over 82 nature strip gardens registered with the City for landscaping.
- 8.3. Restoring the Waurin Ponds Creek, Barwon River and Moorabool River systems, by planting approximately 50,000 indigenous plants in collaboration with the Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA), the Wadawurrung Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation, Deakin University and Golden Pains Shire.
- 8.4. Supporting the local circular economy by making compost processed by the City of Greater Geelong available to the public in 25-litre bags that are available to purchase at local Mitre-10 stores.
- 8.5. Developing new Environmentally Sustainable Design provisions for growth area development, including emission reduction, water efficiency, sustainable transport, urban greening and climate resilience.
- 8.6. Continuing to deliver the Electric Homes Program, engaging over 3,200 residents and supporting 759 household electrification upgrades, leveraging approximately \$4.9 million in community investment from a Council contribution of around \$150,000.
9. In achieving these actions, the City is also advancing the Climate Change Response Plan 2021–2030 and building a more sustainable, resilient and climate-ready community.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.1

Cr E Wilkinson moved, Cr R Story seconded -

That Council notes the Environment Strategy Highlights Report 2025-26 (Attachment 1), and the key environmental sustainability outcomes and achievements.

Carried

Financial Sustainability

10. Implementation of the Environment Strategy 2020-30 is supported through existing budget and external grant funding.
11. The City has secured \$566,000 in external grant funding to support the upgrade of gas boilers to high-efficiency electric boilers powered by renewable energy at Kardinia Aquatic Centre. The project is currently underway and is expected to deliver a payback period of less than one year. Without these electrification works; the City would have faced operational energy costs exceeding \$3 million over the next decade.

Community Engagement

12. The development of the Environment Strategy 2020-30 was informed by extensive community consultation including community workshops, a drop in engagement session, organisation workshops and peer review, online stakeholder workshops, 8-week community survey, 140 written submissions and 194 comments.
13. Implementation of the Environment Strategy 2020-30 includes partnership programs with other agencies, organisations and our community via the Climate Change Partnership Grants program and the Environment & Sustainability Grants program.

Social Equity and Sustainability

14. Social equity has been supported by implementation of the Environment Strategy 2020-30 and projects that improve the City's liveability, resilience to urban heat through re-greening and energy efficiency and annual energy savings for businesses, community facilities and households.

Gender Equality – Gender+ Impact Assessment

15. A Gender+ Impact Assessment is not required for the Environment Strategy Highlights Report 2025-26.
16. Actions supporting the implementation of the Environment Strategy 2020-30 aim to reduce adverse impacts on our natural environment and assist homeowners to build resilience to extreme heat in turn, helping to reduce gendered impacts of climate change.

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

17. Relevant legislation includes the *Local Government Act (2020)* specifically that "Councils are required to promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks."
18. The *Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)* requires that local governments must have regard for the Victorian public health and wellbeing plan, which lists "tackling climate change and its impact on health" as a priority.
19. The *Victorian Climate Change Act (2017)* requires consideration of climate change when local government prepare their Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan including:

- 19.1. the potential impacts of climate change relevant to the decision or action (adaptation); and
- 19.2. the potential contribution to the State's greenhouse gas emissions of the decision or action (mitigation).
- 20. The *Planning Environment Act (1987)* and *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act (1999)*, both provide requirements for Council in relation to protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

Alignment to Council Plan and Vision

- 21. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic priorities:
- 22. Core and Critical Infrastructure
 - 22.1. responsible and sustainable growth and development
- 23. Environment and Circular Economy
 - 23.1. Natural habitat and areas of important biodiversity are identified, protected, connected and restored.
 - 23.2. Significant reductions in emissions and increased community resilience to climate change impacts.
 - 23.3. Minimise waste and manage effective recovery of resources.
- 24. 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.
Sustainable development that supports population growth and protects the natural environment.

Conflict of Interest

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

Risk Assessment and Risk Appetite Statement

- 26. The Environment Strategy 2020-30 and the supporting Environment Strategy Action Plan 2024-26 serves as key instruments to mitigate Council's strategic risks related to 'Natural Environment' and 'Climate Change.'
- 27. Consistent with Council's balanced risk appetite for Environment & Waste, the proposed approach supports measurable environmental improvement and advances circular economy and emissions reduction initiatives within regulatory obligations, aligning with indicators relating to sustainable practice and ongoing operational benefit.
- 28. The recommendation also aligns with Council's cautious financial risk appetite, as initiatives are funded within existing budgets and external grants, delivering demonstrated cost savings and avoiding long-term liabilities. There are no identified areas where the proposal sits outside appetite, with risks appropriately managed and proportionate to the strategic environmental and community outcomes being achieved.

Environmental Sustainability

29. The Environment Strategy 2020-30 provides a framework and operational guidance for the City's environmental sustainability performance across its 5 strategic goals. Working towards achieving these goals requires cross-departmental collaboration and buy-in. This progress report demonstrates there have been significant achievements to date. An Environment Strategy Action Plan for the period 2027-2030 is currently being prepared, to guide the final 3 years of the Environment Strategy 2020-30.

Attachments

1. Environment Strategy Highlights Report 2025-26 [**2.1.1** - 16 pages]

2.2. Geelong Plan for Nature 2026-36

Source: City Infrastructure
Executive Director: James Stirton

Purpose

1. To seek Council adoption of the Geelong Plan for Nature 2026-36 (Attachment 1).
2. To seek Council's acknowledgement of, and thanks to, the community and employees for their valuable contributions to the development of the Geelong Plan for Nature 2026-2036.

Background

3. The City has prepared a Geelong Plan for Nature 2026-36 (the Plan) to set the future direction for biodiversity programs in Greater Geelong and is seeking Council endorsement.
4. The Plan is aligned to Council's commitment to nature as outlined in:
 - 4.1. The 30-year community vision of the Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future for the Greater Geelong region - recognises the uniqueness and significance of our natural environments.
 - 4.2. Our Council Plan 2025-29 - Environment and Circular Economy - commits to protect and enhance our unique natural environment and surrounds.
 - 4.3. Environment Strategy 2020-30 - contains multiple actions to meet the goal of protecting, enhancing, and restoring the regions biodiversity by 2030.
5. The draft Plan was unanimously endorsed for four weeks community engagement by Council on 24 March 2026.
6. Following this endorsement the City commenced a month of engagement, extending from the 25 March to the 31 April 2026 with face-to-face meetings and a Have Your Say page to collect feedback.
7. Over 350 participants and community groups completed the on-line survey and/or provided detailed written submission. We also spoke to nearly 200 people during the engagement.
8. Feedback from community members, organisations, agencies and industry representatives demonstrates strong overall support for the Plan. Participants widely recognise the Plan as a comprehensive and timely response to biodiversity decline, and an important step toward improving the region's ecological health for future generations.

Key Matters

9. The Plan was updated following the extensive feedback during the consultation phase. For more details, see The Geelong Plan for Nature Community Engagement Report 2026 (Attachment 2).
10. Changes made to the Plan aim to strengthen its goals, strategic outcomes, targets and actions, while remaining aligned with the original intent. Key themes include:
 - 10.1. Connectivity as a core priority
 - 10.2. Protection of remnant vegetation and habitat
 - 10.3. Wadawurrung partnerships and cultural knowledge
 - 10.4. Community and partnerships – community is essential but needs support
 - 10.5. Concerns for insect populations
 - 10.6. Urban nature equity and ‘nature poor’ areas
 - 10.7. Impact of light and noise pollution
 - 10.8. Management of domestic animals (cats and dogs)
 - 10.9. Invasive species management
 - 10.10. Implementation, funding and accountability
 - 10.11. Quality of maps and future biodiversity mapping
11. The strong community response to the Plan has created valuable opportunities to establish long-term partnerships that will support the delivery of meaningful, on-ground outcomes and demonstrate measurable progress for nature.
12. The Plan now incorporates a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) framework to guide implementation and track progress.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.2

Cr E Sinclair moved, Cr E Wilkinson seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Adopts the Geelong Plan for Nature 2026-36 (Attachment 1).**
- 2. Acknowledges and thanks the community and employees for their valuable input and feedback throughout the development of the Plan.**

Carried

Financial Sustainability

13. The financial budget implications are highlighted against each action within the Action Plan.
14. Over 80% of the recommended actions will be funded through existing business-as-usual arrangements.
15. Council have allocated a further \$100,000 in the FY27 Budget to support the implementation of the Geelong Biolinks Project.
16. Applications for grants will be pursued to fund operational initiatives, expand Capital Projects, and introduce new programs. Over the past 18 months, the City's Environment Team has secured several grants amounting to more than \$1,000,000, which are designated to support the implementation of actions in the draft Plan.
17. Additional resources may be needed for certain actions in the Action Table, and business cases will be prepared as needed.

Community Engagement

18. The Plan was finalised following extensive feedback from the community, stakeholders, including Wadawurrung Traditional Owners, environmental groups, agency representatives and City Staff. Over 350 detailed surveys and submissions received during the month consultation process have been read and incorporated into the Plan without changing the intent.
19. The Geelong Plan for Nature Community Engagement Report 2026 provides further information (Attachment 2).

Social Equity and Sustainability

20. Within Goal 4: Foster stewardship and strong partnerships of the Plan, there are clearly defined strategic outcomes, targets, and actions aimed at engaging a broader and more diverse demographic in environmental education and conservation initiatives and supporting urban nature equity. These measures include specific targets for increasing participation among culturally and linguistically diverse communities and younger individuals.

Gender Equality – Gender+ Impact Assessment

21. A Gender Impact Assessment was not required for this report.

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

22. The Plan is guided by conventions, legislation, strategies, and policies at the international, national, state, and local levels. A detailed listing is available in Table 2: Planning Hierarchy on page 11 of the Plan.

Alignment to Council Plan and Vision

23. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic priority: Environment and Circular Economy

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

Sustainable development that supports population growth and protects the natural environment.

Conflict of Interest

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

Risk Assessment and Risk Appetite Statement

26. The Plan aligns with the objectives to sustain the natural environment while managing growth. It provides innovative solutions to limit its impact on the environment from its growth and activities, meeting a balanced appetite for risks. Those initiatives are individually costed, with funding existing through business-as-usual activities with the exploration of grants funding to expand operational initiatives and capital projects, meeting the cautious appetite for financial risks.
27. Enterprise Risk Assessment (158) - Strategic Risk: Natural Environment: The City may contribute to or fail to prevent the degradation or loss of Geelong’s natural environment. The risk consequences are documented below.
- 27.1. Damage to our natural environment or wildlife
 - 27.2. Loss of internationally significant habitats
 - 27.3. Disruption to migration corridors for species
 - 27.4. Species extinction events
 - 27.5. Impact to community enjoyment of environment
 - 27.6. Unforeseen remediation and/or offset costs
 - 27.7. Fines
 - 27.8. Unsustainable remediation/management costs for land handed to the City following development
28. Exacerbation of climate change impacts
- 28.1. The Plan serves as an essential instrument enabling the Council to address and reduce this strategic risk.

Environmental Sustainability

29. The Plan sets the future direction for biodiversity programs in Greater Geelong.

Attachments

- 1. Geelong Plan for Nature 2026-36 [2.2.1 - 94 pages]
- 2. Geelong Plan for Nature Community Engagement Report 2026 [2.2.2 - 19 pages]

2.3. Draft Urban Forest Strategy: Healthy Country 2026-2036

Source: Growth & Place
Interim Executive Director: Jacqueline Randles

Purpose

1. To seek Council endorsement for the Draft Urban Forest Strategy – Healthy Country 2026-2036 (Attachment 1) to commence a period of four weeks community consultation.

Background

2. The City has prepared a Draft Urban Forest Strategy - Healthy Country 2026-2036 (the Draft Strategy) in response to Council Resolution of July 2025 to update the existing Urban Forest Strategy 2015-2025. The Strategy sets the future direction for tree canopy and urban greening across the City of Greater Geelong and is seeking Council endorsement prior to a community consultation process (Attachment 1).
3. The Strategy is aligned to Council's commitment to trees as outlined in:
 - 3.1. The 30-year community vision of the Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future for the Greater Geelong region - recognises the uniqueness and significance of our natural environments;
 - 3.2. Our Council Plan 2025-29 - Environment and Circular Economy - commits to protect and enhance our unique natural environment and surrounds; and
 - 3.3. Environment Strategy 2020-30 - contains multiple actions to meet the goal of protecting, enhancing, and restoring the regions biodiversity by 2030.
4. The Draft Strategy will undergo four weeks of community consultation and is scheduled to return to Council for adoption late 2026.

Key Matters

5. The Draft Strategy provides a clear, long-term framework to guide how Council plans, delivers and manages tree canopy and urban greening across the municipality. It is an update of the Urban Forest Strategy 2015-2025.
6. The Draft Strategy establishes a strategic approach to increasing canopy cover, improving climate resilience, and enhancing liveability by identifying where planting should occur, how it can be delivered, and how it integrates with broader Council planning and infrastructure. It responds to increasing climate risks, population growth, and the need to accelerate canopy cover across the municipality.
7. The Draft Strategy includes actions to increase municipal canopy toward the 30% target through more strategic use of available planting space, stronger community partnerships, and improved coordination across Council programs.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.3

Cr R Story moved, Cr E Sinclair seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Endorses the Draft Urban Forest Strategy Healthy Country 2026-2036 (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 Strategy is designed to be delivered within existing resources and partnerships. The Strategy provides guidance for ongoing recurrent activities to ensure these maximise opportunities to add to the urban forest.
9. The 30% canopy coverage timeframe aligns with the City's long-term Clever and Creative Vision for 2047, providing an appropriate timescale to measure canopy growth appropriately, while also providing interim targets toward 2047.
10. Community Infrastructure Grant funding for planting programs ensure Community groups and partnerships are engaged to deliver increased planting.

Community Engagement

11. Extensive community engagement has been undertaken for Trees on Private Land and the Plan for Nature, which has been considered in preparing the Draft Strategy.
12. The Draft Urban Forest Strategy: Healthy Country will be available for feedback for 4 weeks on the City's Have Your Say page. During the 4-week period, social media and media releases will be used to promote the Have Your Say page for community feedback and direct emails to key stakeholders will also be undertaken.

Social Equity and Sustainability

13. The Draft Strategy supports social equity by improving access to greener, cooler, and more liveable environments, particularly in areas of higher vulnerability, which can be delivered sooner with appropriate funding allocation. The draft advances sustainability outcomes through increased urban canopy.

Gender Equality – Gender+ Impact Assessment

14. A gender impact assessment (GIA) was not undertaken for the Draft Strategy. However, it recognises the impact of low canopy and shade in low socio-economic areas which has an indirect impact on gender, specifically urban heat island impacts and health and well-being. The GIA will be explored as a key assessment tool over the life of the Strategy.

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

15. The Draft Strategy is guided by conventions, legislation, strategies, and policies at the State, and local level. A detailed listing is available under the Policy Context section in the Draft Strategy.

Alignment to Council Plan and Vision

16. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic priority:
Environment and Circular Economy.
Healthy and Caring Community.
17. 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

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

Risk Assessment and Risk Appetite Statement

19. The Urban Forest Strategy serves as a key instrument to mitigate Council's strategic risk "Natural Environment – Council may contribute to or fail to prevent the degradation or loss of Geelong's natural environment". Its endorsement will actively participate to mitigating this strategic risk. It will also assist in mitigating risks related to Climate Change.
20. The Urban Forest Strategy aligns with the balanced appetite for environmental risks as it aims to improve tree canopy while managing growth. Initiatives are generally funded through existing business-as-usual activities with the exploration of grant funding to expand initiatives, meeting the cautious appetite for financial risks.

Environmental Sustainability

21. The Urban Forest Strategy supports both climate mitigation and adaptation by increasing urban canopy, which contributes to carbon sequestration, reduces urban heat, retaining water within landscapes after extreme rainfall events and improves resilience to climate risks.
22. The proposal is expected to deliver reductions in energy consumption by lowering urban temperatures and reducing cooling demand for households. Water use will be a key consideration, with an emphasis on integrating stormwater harvesting and water sensitive urban design to support efficient irrigation and improve stormwater quality.
23. The Draft Strategy will provide positive outcomes for natural habitats through increased biodiversity, improved ecological connectivity, and enhanced urban ecosystems while also improving amenity, and health and well-being for the greater community.

Attachments

1. Draft Urban Forest Strategy Healthy Country 2026-2036 [2.3.1 - 26 pages]

2.4. Adoption of Planning Scheme Amendment C484ggee - Heritage Design Guidelines

Source: Growth & Place
Interim Executive Director: Jacqueline Randles

Purpose

1. To adopt Planning Scheme Amendment C484ggee implementing new Heritage Design Guidelines and commensurate local policy update.

Background

2. The City's current Heritage and Design Guidelines (City of Greater Geelong, 1997) have provided an effective framework for guiding development in heritage areas for more than two decades.
3. Council adopted the Heritage Design Guidelines 2025 and resolved to commence this Planning Scheme Amendment at its meeting on 25 November 2025.
4. However, the 1997 Guidelines were prepared in a different policy context. Recent changes include increased focus on sustainable design, accessibility and contemporary architectural approaches. The 1997 Guidelines required updating to reflect updated planning policy, community expectations, and best practice heritage management.
5. The new Greater Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines (City of Greater Geelong, July 2026) will replace the Heritage and Design Guidelines (City of Greater Geelong, 1997), building on their successful legacy with contemporary design principles, sustainability standards and accessibility considerations.
6. Introducing the Greater Geelong Heritage Guidelines (City of Greater Geelong, July 2026) as an incorporated document under Clauses 15.03-1L and 72.04 of the Planning Scheme will give them statutory weight, providing greater certainty and consistency for applicants and Statutory Planning.
7. Amendment C484ggee also makes commensurate updates to the local planning policy in the Planning Scheme at Clause 15.03-1L Heritage conservation - Greater Geelong to ensure there is consistency and alignment between policy and the Guidelines and to remove duplication with the state planning policy clause.

Key Matters

8. Heritage design guidelines provide clear, practical advice to guide alterations, additions, infill development, and new works within heritage overlays. They include principles for appropriate scale, form, and siting of new development, integration of sustainable design and accessibility improvements, demolition, conservation, and repair of heritage fabric, and use of materials, colour and detailing that complement heritage character. The new Guidelines will assist applicants in preparing proposals that respect heritage values and support consistent, transparent decision-making by Council.

9. Amendment C484ggee supports the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) within the Planning Scheme by updating heritage design guidelines to ensure they are modernised and reflect current development approaches and sustainability.
10. The Guidelines were developed in consultation with heritage specialists and Council officers and benchmarked against best practice examples from other Victorian local government authorities.
11. Some updates of clarification, gaps and administrative improvements were made to the Guidelines post-Council endorsement for proceeding to exhibition. These clarified the Guidelines for altered streetscapes of bluestone kerbs and channel, updated some images and captions, corrected minor typos and grammatical errors, and clarified requirements for towers, faceted bays and heritage landscapes. These formed part of the exhibited Guidelines. As the Guidelines have been changed, the date of them is also updated in the document and where they are referenced in the local policy and list of incorporated documents.
12. Exhibition of the amendment was undertaken between 16 April and 18 May 2026. No submissions were received.
13. Post-exhibition it has been necessary change the local policy clause 15.03-1L to ensure that the strategy related to altered streetscapes of bluestone channels (under 70% intactness) is aligned to the clarification that was included in the Guidelines. A minor change to the local policy clause about subdivision of land has also been updated to use the term 'support subdivision' instead of 'encourage subdivision' as it better reflects the intent of this policy and harmonises with the requirements of the policy. With these changes included, the amendment can now be adopted.
14. With the updates to the Guidelines, it is appropriate that they be re-adopted in the changed form.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.4

Cr R Story moved, Cr A Katos seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Adopts Amendment C484ggee – Heritage Design Guidelines – in the form outlined in Attachment 1 of this report;**
- 2. Adopts the Greater Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines, July 2026 (Attachment 1); and**
- 3. Submits the adopted Amendment C484ggee together with the prescribed information to the Minister for Planning requesting approval.**

Carried

Financial Sustainability

15. The amendment approval fee is met within the department budget.

Community Engagement

16. The amendment was placed on exhibition on Council's webpage and with notice in City News on 10 April 2026. Direct notice was given to Heritage Victoria, National Trust, Deakin University School of Architecture and Built Environment, and Department of Transport and Planning - Transport.

Social Equity and Sustainability

17. The amendment will have positive social equity and sustainability effects by promoting and contributing to equitable access to heritage places, more inclusive design outcomes, and positive environmental and climate objectives by:
 - 17.1. Supporting community identity and connection through the protection of Geelong's heritage;
 - 17.2. Providing clear, publicly available guidance to ensure transparent, consistent decision making;
 - 17.3. Enabling diverse housing opportunities within heritage areas by supporting contextually appropriate infill and adaptive reuse projects; and
 - 17.4. Promoting retention and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, reducing demolition waste and embodied carbon emissions.

Gender Equality – Gender+ Impact Assessment

18. A Gender+ Impact Assessment has not been completed on the planning scheme amendment as it is implementing Guidelines for future changes to places of heritage significance and does not fall within the criteria of key plans affecting Council services, programs and policies.

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

19. The amendment achieves the following objectives of planning in Victoria as set out in Section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* including:
 - 19.1. *“(a) to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land.*
 - 19.2. *(b) to provide for the protection of natural and man made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity.*
 - 19.3. *(d) to conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historic interest or otherwise of special cultural value.*
 - 19.4. *(e) to protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and co-ordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community.*

19.5. (g) to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.”

20. The amendment achieves these by providing updated heritage design guidance for development affecting places included in the heritage overlay across Greater Geelong.

Alignment to Council Plan and Vision

21. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic priority: Heritage and Culture.
22. 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.
Sustainable development that supports population growth and protects the natural environment.

Conflict of Interest

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

Risk Assessment and Risk Appetite Statement

24. The recommendation aligns with Council’s cautious appetite for Regulatory, Legal and Governance risks by implementing contemporary heritage guidance through the statutory planning scheme amendment process and supporting consistent, transparent decision-making.
25. The recommendation also aligns with Council’s balanced appetite for Community risks by protecting heritage places that contribute to community identity and sense of place. Adoption of the Guidelines supports consistent heritage outcomes while balancing conservation, sustainability and contemporary development. Failure to proceed would result in reliance on outdated guidance, increasing the risk of inconsistent outcomes and gradual loss of heritage character.

Environmental Sustainability

26. The amendment will not have any adverse effects on the environment. Protection for heritage places will retain existing infrastructure and resources. Geelong Heritage Design Guidelines (City of Greater Geelong, July 2026) promotes sustainable development through conserving valuable resources and economizing on materials, balanced against the demands for development.

Attachments

1. Amendment C484ggee – Heritage Design Guidelines [2.4.1 - 111 pages]

2.5. Future Library Service Delivery Model

Source: City Life
Executive Director: Anthony Basford

Purpose

1. To seek Council direction regarding future membership of a Geelong Regional Library Corporation shared service model for the future delivery of the City's library services.

Background

2. Council is required to consider this matter due to the State Government change in the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) (the Act) that requires regional library corporations to transition to alternative governance arrangements by 1 July 2031.
3. The City of Greater Geelong is currently a member of the Geelong Regional Library Corporation (GRLC) for the delivery of library services and has been a member since GRLC's formal establishment in 1997.
4. The GRLC is made up of five Member Councils: The City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire Council, Golden Plains Shire Council, the Borough of Queenscliff and Colac Otway Shire Council (joined in 2021).
5. The GRLC library network is made up of 20 library facilities (15 in Greater Geelong) with a floor area of approx. 18,662sqm plus three mobile services making it the largest library corporation in Victoria.
6. In late 2023 the GRLC Board undertook a review of future governance arrangements to understand options available to the Member Councils and GRLC Board. The review assessed GRLC governance and operational efficiency.
7. On the 15 February 2024 the GRLC Board endorsed a company limited by guarantee model as its preferred future structure.
8. In July 2024, all Member Councils of GRLC including the City of Greater Geelong resolved the following:

"That Council:

- 1. Notes that the Local Government Act 2020 requires regional library corporations to transition to a new enterprise model by 30 June 2031.*
- 2. Notes that the Geelong Regional Library Corporation at its 15 February 2024 board meeting, endorsed a Company Limited by Guarantee as its preferred future enterprise model to enable project scoping, transition planning, and costing in preparation for member Council decisions.*
- 3. Requests that Geelong Regional Library Corporation prepare a transition report for formal consideration by Geelong Regional Library Corporation member Councils at a future council meeting that:*

3.1. Sets out future governance arrangements and indicative cost impacts for members Councils for delivery of library services under the new enterprise model; and

3.2. Seeks formal approval to transition to the new enterprise model.”

9. Considerable work has been undertaken by the GRLC Board, executive and staff, the Executive Steering Committee made up of Directors/General Managers from each Member Council, City of Greater Geelong staff, consultants and other expertise to meet the requirements set out in the resolution of July 2024.
10. Two GRLC Board workshops have been held to unpack the proposed model, build understanding, acknowledge areas of mutual agreement and areas requiring further work. These workshops were attended by Councillor representatives to the GRLC Board, Chief Executive Officers and Directors/General Managers of Member Councils.

Key Matters

11. Regardless of the preferred library services delivery model, a range of matters must be considered including protection of Council assets and heritage collections, management of workforce transition and industrial relations obligations, establishment of service standards and accountability mechanisms, minimisation of financial and operational transition risk, and development of a financial framework to ensure equitable distribution of member council contributions ensuring sustainable service costs and long-term financial planning for members, in addition to a clear strategic direction for future library services.
12. The GRLC run library services network achieves strong community satisfaction outcomes through the annual Community Satisfaction Survey and is consistently among the City's highest-performing services from a community rated perspective. (Community Satisfaction Results 2025, 2024 and 2023).
13. Public Library Victoria (PLV) report annually on the performance of libraries across the State. Through the PLV metrics GRLC has consistently been ranked as one of the highest performing library services in Victoria.
14. Despite the high community satisfaction and PLV performance measures, a number of issues have been identified with the current operating arrangements, including:
 - 14.1. Limited Council control over library operations and strategic direction;
 - 14.2. Poor overarching governance documentation (ie an outdated library agreement);
 - 14.3. An absence of service level agreements and accountability mechanisms;
 - 14.4. Limited visibility of the City's circa \$16m investment in library services, limited community awareness of Council's funding role and minimal acknowledgement of Member Councils in libraries or promotional material.
 - 14.5. Duplication between Council and GRLC corporate functions and community programs; and
 - 14.6. No clearly defined Council strategy or policy direction for library services.

15. The requirement to transition to a new operating model provides an opportunity for Member Councils of GRLC to review the current arrangements and address any concerns or issues, and ensure all items outlined in item 14 are addressed as part of the transition.
16. To support Councillors to make this decision, Officers have undertaken a range of activities and analysis to inform the recommendations outlined in this report and presented these through a number of briefings and updates to Councillors.
17. As part of this work a consultant was engaged by the City. Their analysis resulted in the identification of three potential future operating models:
 - 17.1. **Option 1** – GRLC 2.0: Transition to a new Company Limited by Guarantee while maintaining a shared service with regional partners.
 - 17.2. **Option 2** – In-House (CoGG Only): Withdraw from GRLC and establish a fully internal library service for Greater Geelong.
 - 17.3. **Option 3** – In-House (CoGG + Regional): CoGG withdraws from GRLC and offers to provide library services as a shared service provider to regional councils.
18. In summary the consultant's report key findings were:
 - 18.1. The three options are **Financially Comparable** over a 10-year period.
 - 18.2. **Performance and Satisfaction:** GRLC is generally an effective and efficient provider; however, strategic misalignment, ambiguous governance roles, and weak relationship were identified.
 - 18.3. **Governance Deficiencies:** Inconsistent policy integration, unclear service standards, and tension between Member Councils and the Corporation.
 - 18.4. **Risk and Transition:** All options carry a level of industrial, legal, financial and reputational risks that need to be managed.
 - 18.5. **Community and Regional Impact:** Libraries serve as critical social infrastructure and need to be managed with care and clear communication.
19. In addition to the work undertaken by the consultant, further analysis was undertaken internally as well as additional advice sought on asset management, industrial relations and service level agreements. The pros and cons of each option were assessed by officers with this information being provided to Councillors. The internal assessment was informed by sector knowledge, commercial analysis, financial modelling, and sector benchmarking.
20. The GRLC is the largest library service in the State. Finding suitable independent comparative / benchmarking data was difficult. Based on the available data, internal analysis identified that the cost to deliver by GRLC is higher than the State average on a per capita basis compared to a number of other current service models adopted by other Councils including in house, company or shared service.
21. Transition to an alternate operating model is likely to result in financial impact for the City, particularly relating to workforce transition, governance establishment and service transition costs. It is likely if option 2 or 3 were pursued that the costs of a transition

and continuing to support the current operating model until exit will increase costs in short to medium term before any efficiencies are realised.

22. This report is seeking a decision of Council in relation to membership of a future regional shared service model for delivery of library services. The report is **not** seeking adoption of any of the supporting documentation listed below. Further work on these documents is required and will come to Council for consideration in late 2026/early 2027 should the recommendation within this report be supported.
 - 22.1. A **Constitution** for the governance of the new company that will delivery library services on behalf of Member Councils;
 - 22.2. A **Library Partnership Agreement** outlining the arrangements of the partnership between the Member Councils and the new Company including financial modelling with regards to member contribution structure and requirements;
 - 22.3. **Lease, Licence or Management Agreements** for use of library facilities and asset use; and
 - 22.4. A **Service Level Agreement** being the agreement between the company and individual Member Councils regarding what is expected for the investment provided.
23. At the time of writing this report, no Member Council has resolved to enter into the new shared service arrangement; however, a number have indicated verbally their intention to do so.
24. There are several factors driving the need for this decision now, including:
 - 24.1. The 2031 deadline;
 - 24.2. Current Councillor knowledge and awareness;
 - 24.3. The limited time post the 2028 Council elections to wind up the GRLC;
 - 24.4. Interest from other Member Councils to confirm their future library service delivery arrangements; and
 - 24.5. Focusing City resources into an agreed way forward.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.5

Cr E Wilkinson moved, Cr T Sullivan seconded -

That Council:

- 1. Notes the requirement under the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) section 330 for library Corporations to be wound up by 1 July 2031;**
- 2. Notes the analysis and review work undertaken including findings by both the City and the Geelong Regional Library Corporation;**
- 3. Commits the City of Greater Geelong to 'Option 1: Transition to a new Company Limited by Guarantee while maintaining a shared service with regional partners', for the delivery of library services with its current partner the Geelong Regional Library Corporation;**
- 4. Notes that the issues outlined in this report with the current library services delivery model will be addressed in any future arrangements;**
- 5. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate to undertake activities with Geelong Regional Library Corporation and other Member Councils that progress the formation of regional shared service model;**
- 6. Notes a further report will be presented to adopt the governance arrangements and documentation for Option 1; and**
- 7. Endorses the development of a City of Greater Geelong position paper that outlines Council's strategic objectives for library services.**

Carried

Financial Sustainability

25. Council invests more than \$16m per year into library services through direct allocation of funds to GRLC to deliver library services, payment of cleaning and utility costs, and support operational costs to run Western Heights library. The 2025-26 financial year allocation to libraries as a percentage of total budget is approx. 3%.
26. The State Government public library recurrent grant has remained unchanged since 2019. Despite promises to lift the grant and review the funding formula this has not occurred. This has resulted in costs shifting the bulk of library operational costs onto local government.
27. The total asset value of the City's library facilities is \$126m with an annual depreciation value of \$1.6m in 2025-26.
28. GRLC have advised that the current regional model (option 1) currently spreads a range of costs across the network that would otherwise have to be covered by each individual Council, as well as increasing the buying power in relation to books, library management systems and other materials. Option 3 would also spread these service costs.
29. The GRLC Annual Report 2024/25 indicates that "Library funding per capita from Member Councils" at \$46.55 is higher than the State average per capita cost at \$33.81 (2023/24 figure due to timing). It should be noted that this financial period included the opening of the Biyal-a Armstrong Creek library.
30. Internal analysis has suggested that there are likely to be savings in the medium to longer term should Council adopt Option 3; however, higher short term costs are possible due to IR and service requirements.
31. The review work undertaken by GRLC has identified that further work is required in relation to ensuring the contribution by all Member Councils reflects an appropriate sharing of regional costs. This work is continuing and is required regardless of the need to transition.

Community Engagement

32. No direct community engagement has taken place at this point as the recommended model does not propose any change to service levels, only a different overarching governance model.

Social Equity and Sustainability

33. Libraries are a core component of local community infrastructure, providing free and equitable access to resources, spaces and services that support learning, participation and wellbeing.
34. GRLC have advised that on average there are:
 - 34.1. 120,000 visits across the library network
 - 34.2. 242,000 loans, including: 195,000 physical loans and 47,000 digital loans
 - 34.3. 20,000 Wi-Fi sessions, supporting digital access and connectivity

35. This approximately equates to:
 - 35.1. 1.4 million visits annually
 - 35.2. 2.9 million total loans annually
36. GRLC also maintains a strong and active membership base of over 118,000 members, representing approximately 30% of the regional population.
37. As noted in the GRLC Annual Report 2024/25 libraries play an important role in social equity through program such as:
 - 37.1. Diverse collections: Curating materials that represent various cultures, languages, and perspectives;
 - 37.2. Ensuring resources cater to different ages, abilities, and interests;
 - 37.3. Inclusive programming: Developing programs and events that celebrate diversity and the needs of all community members;
 - 37.4. Staff training: Ongoing training on diversity, equity, and inclusion to promote cultural competency, unconscious bias awareness, trauma-informed practices, and inclusive customer service;
 - 37.5. Community engagement: Seeking input from diverse community groups;
 - 37.6. Accessible services: Ensuring our libraries are physically accessible to everyone;
 - 37.7. Inclusive policies: Developing and enforcing policies that promote inclusivity; and
 - 37.8. Representation: Promote diversity in staff and leadership.

Gender Equality – Gender+ Impact Assessment

38. A Gender Impact Assessment has been completed based on the officer recommendation.
39. Should Council adopt a different library service delivery model a further Gender Impact Assessment will be completed.

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

40. The Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) section 330 requires regional library corporations to be wound up by 1 July 2031 in line with requirements of the Local Government Act 1989 (Vic).
41. Should Council proceed as recommended, consideration will need to be given to Council's Procurement Policy and requirements under the Local Government Act 2020 (Vic).

Alignment to Council Plan and Vision

42. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic priority:
Governance and Integrity

43. 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.

Conflict of Interest

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

Risk Assessment and Risk Appetite Statement

45. Council’s strategic commitment “to advance community outcomes for a thriving Greater Geelong” necessitates that it accepts some risks that accompany growth, sustainability and innovation, that are proportionate with the potential reward.
46. The delivery of library services can be assessed against:
- 46.1. *“To ensure efficient and effective delivery of services that meets the needs of the community”* as outlined in Councils risk appetite statement. Council seeks a **“Balanced”** approach when considering *“Managing in-house operations versus contracting out services and maintaining control.”*, *“Managing financial capacity versus community needs and expectations.”* and *“Ensuring efficient operations without compromising community satisfaction.”*; and
- 46.2. *“To ensure Councils’ finances are sustainably managed to fund the continual delivery of BAU operations and strategic projects, so that Council can achieve its internal and external objectives”*. Council seeks a **Cautious** approach when considering *“Balancing financial flexibility with affordability and the need to meet growing community expectations.”*.

Environmental Sustainability

47. Not applicable for this report.

Attachments

Nil

2.6. Proposal to declare Denny's Place, Geelong to be a public road

Source: City Infrastructure
Executive Director: James Stirton

Purpose

1. To seek approval to initiate the statutory procedures under sections 207A and 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* to declare Denny's Place, Geelong as a public road under section 204(1) of the Act, as shown in **Attachment 1 – Land Area**.

Background

2. The State Government (Minister for Planning) acquired a property at 28 Malop St Geelong as part of the Revitalising Central Geelong Partnership and has built an extension of the laneway known as Dennys Place to create a connection through to Malop St, Geelong. The works were funded as part of the Geelong City Deal, with an agreement that at completion of the laneway breakthrough, the lane and associated infrastructure would be transferred to the City's ownership.
3. To satisfy the State Government Land Policy it is required that the land become a Road vested to the City of Greater Geelong

Key Matters

4. The creation of a laneway between Malop St and Dennys Pl was identified in the Central Geelong Action Plan and further detailed in the Laneways Action Plan in 2018.
5. The laneway was delivered through the Revitalising Central Geelong Partnership and funded through the Geelong City Deal
6. The laneway was created through the purchase of 28 Malop St, Geelong and demolition of the front and rear walls of the building.
7. The City is currently managing the laneway under a licence entered into with the State Minister for Planning in 2024.
8. There is an obligation within the Geelong City Deal and laneways strategy to transfer ownership of the laneway and associated infrastructure from the State to Council.
9. The Road Management Act 2004 provides the framework for initiating the transfer of ownership in compliance with the State's Land Policy.
10. Council has the authority to declare Denny's Place as a public road under section 204(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989*. Under clause 1(5) of Schedule 5 of the Road Management Act 2004, public highways within the municipality vest in Council.
11. Prior to resolving to declare Denny's Place a public road, a submission hearing process in accordance with section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989* is required.

12. The submission hearing process will provide the opportunity for the public to make written submissions and if they wish, to present their submission to a Submissions Review Panel.
13. Council will receive a further report with the outcomes of the submission hearing process, which it will consider when determining whether to declare Denny's Place as a public road.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.6

Cr A Katos moved, Cr E Kontelj seconded -

That Council:

1. **Endorses the undertaking of a community engagement process, including the issue of a public notice and the invitation of submissions in accordance with section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, regarding Council's intention to declare Denny's Place, Geelong as a public road.**
2. **Appoints a Submissions Review Panel to hear from any person who wishes to appear, either in person or by representation, in support of their submission; and**
3. **Notes that a further report will be presented to Council to consider the outcome of the submissions hearing process.**

Carried

Financial Sustainability

14. This project has been delivered as part of the Revitalising Central Geelong Partnership with funding made available through the Geelong City Deal.
15. As part of the agreement associated with the implementation of this project the State Government requires the land to be transferred to the City with all assets in the laneway to come under the ownership of the City
16. Costs associated with the transfer of land and ongoing upkeep of all assets are to be borne by the City.
17. The project delivers economic activation of the Little Malop St precinct.

Community Engagement

18. Community engagement will be undertaken on the Have Your Say page and a notice published in the local newspaper.
19. In accordance with section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, any person may make a written submission on the proposal to declare Denny's Place a public road. A submitter may also request to appear in person, or be represented, in support of their submission at a hearing.
20. Council will be provided with the outcome of community engagement and minutes of a Submissions Review Panel Hearing.

Social Equity and Sustainability

21. Declaring Denny's Place a public road will support equitable access to pedestrians from Malop Street to Denny's Place and onto Little Malop Street. This will ensure the infrastructure is available for community use as intended without reliance on informal or uncertain access arrangements. Formal vesting also supports clarity of responsibility for maintenance and safety, contributing to a consistent and inclusive public realm.

Gender Equality – Gender+ Impact Assessment

22. An assessment was not completed on the proposed road declaration 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

23. Section 204(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* gives Council the power to declare the laneway a public road.
24. Section 207(a) of the *Local Government Act 1989* provides the right for any person to make a submission in accordance with section 223 on the proposed exercise of the power under section 204.
25. Council is required to authorise the issue of public notice in accordance with section 223 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.
26. Declaring the laneway as a public road will vest in Council under section 11 of the *Road Management Act 2004*. This enables Council to manage, maintain and regulate

the road in accordance with its statutory powers, duties and functions under the relevant legislation.

Alignment to Council Plan and Vision

27. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic priority:
Core and Critical Infrastructure
28. This report aligns with the Community led 30-year Vision, “Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future” community aspiration:
A destination that attracts local and international visitors.
An inclusive, diverse, healthy and socially connected community.

Conflict of Interest

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

Risk Assessment and Risk Appetite Statement

30. The proposal to declare Denny’s Place a public road aligns with Council’s Risk Appetite by applying a compliant and transparent statutory process, while maintaining low financial, operations and community risk, and strong governance controls.

Environmental Sustainability

31. The proposed declaration of Denny’s Place, Geelong as a public road is not expected to result in any significant adverse environmental impacts. The laneway supports the efficient and safe movement of pedestrians from Malop Street through to Little Malop Street.

Attachments

1. Land Area Attachment 1 D26 221763 [2.6.1 - 1 page]

2.7. 2026-27 Budget - Typographical Corrections

Source: Corporate Services
Executive Director: Troy Edwards

Purpose

1. To correct the amount declared to be raised by the Waste Management Charges for the 2026-27 Budget.
2. To correct the Long Day Care and Occasional Care fees listed in Appendix 4 - Fees and Charges Schedule of the 2026-27 Budget.

Background

3. On 23 June 2026 Council adopted the 2026-27 Budget and declared the rates and charges for the 2026-27 financial year.
4. Council officers have subsequently identified typographical errors in the Council resolution relating to the Waste Management Charge amount and in the Long Day Care and Occasional Care fees listed in the Fees and Charges Schedule.
5. The amount in the Council resolution for the Waste Management Charge was incorrectly stated as \$78,780,733 instead of \$73,780,733. The total amount of rates and charges declared by Council (\$350,870,024) and the amount declared for General Rates (\$277,089,291) were correct.
6. The correct Waste Management Charge amount of \$73,780,733 was included in the 2026-27 Declaration of Rates and Charges attached to the Council report considered at the 23 June 2026 Council meeting.
7. The amounts for Long Day Care and Occasional Care in the Fees and Charges Schedule appendix of the budget attached to the Council report were incorrectly stated as:
 - 7.1. Long Day Care per hour \$24.00 instead of \$25.00
 - 7.2. Long Day Care per day \$168.00 instead of \$172.50
 - 7.3. Long Day Care per week \$783.00 instead of \$802.50
 - 7.4. Occasional Care one-hour session \$23.00 instead of \$24.00
 - 7.5. Occasional Care two-hour session \$47.00 instead of \$48.00
 - 7.6. Occasional Care five-hour session \$101.00 instead of \$104.00

Key Matters

8. The proposed corrections do not alter the 2026-2027 Budget adopted by Council.
9. The total amount of rates and charges declared by Council (\$350,870,024) remains unchanged.

10. The proposed corrections ensure the Council resolution aligns with the adopted Budget and Declaration of Rates and Charges.
11. The proposed corrections support Council's commitment to good governance and compliance with the *Local Government Act 2020*.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.7

Cr A Aitken moved, Cr A Katos seconded -

That Council:

1. Notes that the resolution passed by Council on 23 June 2026 contained a typographical error in relation to the declared Waste Management Charge.
2. Declares the correct amount intended to be raised by the Waste Management Charge for the period 1 July 2026 – 30 June 2027 is \$73,780,733.
3. Notes that the correct Waste Management Charge of \$73,780,733 was stated correctly in the 2026-27 Budget and Declaration of Rates and Charges attachments adopted at the 23 June 2026 council meeting.
4. Confirms that the total amount of rates and charges declared by Council of \$350,870,024, including General Rates of \$277,089,291, remains unchanged
5. Notes the fees for Long Day Care and Occasional Care in the Fees and Charges outlined in Appendix 4 of the 2026-27 budget contained typographical errors.
6. Approves the fees for Long Day Care and Occasional Care are:
 - 6.1. Long Day Care per hour \$25.00
 - 6.2. Long Day Care per day \$172.50
 - 6.3. Long Day Care per week \$802.50
 - 6.4. Occasional Care one hour session \$24.00
 - 6.5. Occasional Care two hour session \$48.00
 - 6.6. Occasional Care five hour session \$104.00
7. Authorises the Chief Executive Officer or delegate to update the Fees and Charges Appendix of the 2026-27 budget to incorporate the corrections outlined in point 6 of this resolution.
8. Notes these corrections do not alter/change the adopted 2026-27 budget.

Carried

Financial Sustainability

12. There are no direct financial sustainability considerations relating to this report, as the proposed changes seek to correct typographical errors only, and do not alter the income budget and overall financial position of the adopted 2026-2027 Budget.

Community Engagement

13. No further community engagement is required, as the correct waste management charge figure has been included in all the relevant adopted budget documents, and the total amount of rates and charges declared by Council (\$350,870,024) remains unchanged.

Social Equity and Sustainability

14. There are no social equity or sustainability issues arising from this report.

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, and it does not have a direct or significant impact on the public, as this report seeks to correct a typographical error.

Relevant Law/Policy/Legal Implications

16. The Council resolution is operative act of the declaring the rates and charges. It is important that the figures outlined in the resolution of Council, and the adopted budget documents align.
17. Correcting the typographical errors through a public Council resolution promotes transparency and good governance.

Alignment to Council Plan and Vision

18. This report aligns with the Council Plan 2025-29 strategic priority:
Governance and Integrity
19. This report aligns with the Community led 30-year Vision, “Greater Geelong: A Clever and Creative Future” community aspiration:
A prosperous economy that supports jobs and education opportunities.
Development and implementation of sustainable solutions.

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. If the errors are not corrected, there is a risk of inconsistency and uncertainty in relation to the adopted 2026-27 Budget, the Declaration of Rates and Charges and the Fees and Charges Schedule.

22. Council has no appetite for decisions that compromise the integrity and good governance of Council. The proposed corrections support transparency, accountability and good governance.

Environmental Sustainability

23. There are no environmental sustainability impacts arising from this report.

Attachments

Nil

2.8. Councillor Appointments to Committees

Source: Corporate Services
Executive Director: Troy Edwards

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. 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
8. This report proposes one amendment to the current Councillor Committee appointments, relating to the Councillor appointment to the Audit and Risk Committee highlighted in Attachment 1.
9. In order to maintain consistency of appointments with the Mayoral term, the date of a full review of the appointments will remain unchanged, as scheduled for November 2026.

RESOLUTION - Item 2.8

Cr C Burson moved, Cr A Aitken seconded -

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

Carried

Financial Sustainability

13. 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

14. The appointments to Advisory Committees are considered effective mechanisms for ensuring Council remains aware of community needs and priorities.
15. 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.
16. Outcomes of the amended Councillor appointments will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Social Equity and Sustainability

17. 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

18. 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

19. 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

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

24. 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

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

Attachments

1. Councillor Appointments to Committees July 2026 [2.8.1 - 1 page]

3. RECORD OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF COUNCILLORS

Source: Corporate Services

Executive Director: Troy Edwards

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 Wilkinson seconded -

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

Carried

4. CONFIDENTIAL

RESOLUTION - Item 4.0.1

Cr R Nelson moved, Cr E Kontelj seconded -

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.

Carried

4.1. Audit and Risk Committee - June Meeting Minutes, Strategic Internal Audit Plan and Activity Report June 2026 (Confidential)

CONFIDENTIAL

RESOLUTION - Item 4.1

Cr R Story 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 Council business information being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations. This section is applicable because of the sensitive and varied nature of the information received and considered by the Audit & Risk Committee from time-to-time which can pertain to external stakeholders also.

Carried

RESOLUTION - Item 4.2

Cr R Nelson moved, Cr A Katos seconded -

That the meeting be opened to the public.

The meeting was opened to the public at 7:50pm

Carried

5. CLOSE OF MEETING

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 7:50pm on Tuesday 28 July 2026.

Signed: _____

Cr Stretch Kontelj (Mayor)

Date: _____