

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND SUBMISSIONS 22 SEPTEMBER 2026



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SUBMITTER 1. LUKE ROBERTS

Subject: St Leonards Development Contribution Fund Relevant City Department: Growth & Place

Question 1:

With the local government now covering the cost of the Early Learning Centre, and with the redevelopment plans for both St Leonards Lake Reserve and Charles McCarthy Reserve already largely designed, planned and effectively shovel-ready since 2022, would Council consider using some of the development contribution funds originally allocated for community infrastructure towards progressing these projects? In particular, could the funding that may no longer be required for the Early Learning Centre be reassessed and potentially redirected towards the Lake Reserve and Charles McCarthy Reserve redevelopment?

Question 1 Response

Thank you for your question Luke.

The City recognises the importance of the St Leonards Lake Reserve and Charles McCarthy Reserve projects.

The '2015 St Leonards Shared Infrastructure Funding Plan' includes a contribution towards an Early Years and Community Hub. With the Victorian Government now progressing delivery of an Early Learning Centre in St Leonards, the City is actively considering the future use of these funds and how they can best contribute to community infrastructure outcomes within St Leonards. The City has taken a measured approach to this work because it has been important to gain confidence that the Victorian Government's Early Learning Centre would proceed before assessing the future use of funds originally collected towards an Early Years and Community Hub.

We recognise the community's interest in this matter and will keep the community informed as consideration progresses.

SUBMITTER 2. D M SCOTT

Subject: Indented Head Infrastructure

Relevant City Department: City Infrastructure

Question 1:

As a ratepayer in Indented Head with severe health conditions and injuries from two serious accidents, the lack of infrastructure in our area directly harms my health. Ibbotson Road remains unsealed, and the thick dust severely aggravates my breathing. Furthermore, both Ibbotson Road and The Esplanade are deeply hazardous to drive on. Even at 20km/h, my car regularly slides sideways over the massive potholes and corrugations on Ibbotson Road, narrowly missing trees. Meanwhile, the large tree roots on The Esplanade have raised the bitumen into jagged ridges, causing severe pain and flare-ups to my accident injuries. Compounding this danger, mobile tower signals completely drop out during peak holiday seasons due to tourist overcrowding. Living with severe medical conditions, being left without mobile service during an emergency is life-threatening. St Leonards and Indented Head ratepayers are being left behind while holidaymakers overload our basic amenities. My questions to Council are: Given the severe impact on resident health and safety, what is the exact timeline for Council to seal Ibbotson Road and repair the raised bitumen on The Esplanade?

Question 1 Response

Thank you for your submission.

At present, the City does not have a program to seal or upgrade its 400km unsealed road network, and Ibbotson Street is not currently identified for upgrade through Council's capital works program.

Residents may wish to explore a Special Rates and Charges Scheme, where the cost of the works is shared between benefiting property owners and the City. If you and your neighbours are interested in this option, we encourage you to submit a petition to Council so the process and requirements can be discussed further. For context, in 2023 Council previously consulted with property owners in Indented Head regarding a similar scheme. The proposal did not proceed at that time.

The City will continue to maintain Ibbotson Street in accordance with the Municipal Road Management Plan and address any defects that reach intervention levels. We also acknowledge concerns regarding dust from unsealed roads. Independent testing of the gravel material used on Ibbotson Street confirmed that it does not pose a health risk.

In relation to The Esplanade, this is a State road managed by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). Responsibility for maintaining and repairing the road surface, including any areas affected by raised or deteriorated bitumen, rests with DTP rather than the City. We have forwarded your concerns to the Department and requested that they investigate and respond accordingly.

Question 2:

Will Council actively advocate to telecommunications providers to install booster signals for the mobile towers in Indented Head during the peak holiday seasons?

Question 2 Response

The provision and operation of mobile telecommunications services, including mobile towers and network upgrades, are the responsibility of telecommunications providers and the Australian Government. Council does not have the authority to direct telecommunications companies to install additional infrastructure or increase network capacity.

The City recognises the importance of reliable mobile coverage for residents and visitors, particularly during emergencies and peak holiday periods. The issues raised will be considered, and opportunities for advocacy with telecommunications providers and relevant government representatives will be explored subject to the City's processes and endorsement.

Residents experiencing ongoing mobile service issues are also encouraged to report them directly to their provider, as customer data assists in identifying areas requiring network improvements.

SUBMITTER 3. TREVOR RIXON

Subject: Roads in New Estates

Relevant City Department: Growth & Place

Question 1:

Is the developer legally responsible for sealing all the roads on the new estate as indicated on the Planning Permit 970/2014 Plan of Subdivision? If they are legally responsible, why were they allowed to avoid doing this? Can they still be held accountable to resolve this matter?

Question 1 Response

Thank you for your Question Trevor

The Baybreeze Estate was approved through Planning Scheme Amendment C325, which was considered by an independent Planning Panel.

Under Planning Permit 970/2014, the developer was required to construct and seal roads where specified by the permit. The permit did not include a requirement to seal the western side of Ibbotson Street.

As there is no permit requirement for that section of road to be sealed, the developer cannot be required to undertake these works or be held accountable for not completing them.

SUBMITTER 4. JOHN WINKLER

Subject: Kyema Drive

Relevant City Department: Growth and Place

Question 1:

This question is in relation to my previous question of 25th August 2026.

The amended and endorsed plans for PP-1246-2023 32 Kyema Drive include 25% transparency fences, at full height. The fences as built are not transparent for the full height. The amendment plans were agreed to by all parties at VCAT, not only because they met surveillance requirements, but also because the amended design - at full height - would not restrict overland flow to the floodway and therefore satisfy other concerns raised by residents.

The fence as it is currently built is not full height. It has a solid lower plinth which now separates Kyema Drive from its floodway to the East and would obstruct overland flow to a level higher than the floor heights of 8 homes in Kyema Drive. The fence is not temporary as suggested by council in response to my original question. It is a permanent boundary fence that was constructed well in advance of the temporary site fences that were added later for construction purposes. Residents request council assistance to simply have the fence altered on the basis of being compliant as drawn on the endorsed plans. That is, for 25 percent transparency at Full Height from existing ground level, and specifically without a lower plinth. To be clear, the request is for compliance simply with the detail on the plans, and not to be confused with any missing overlays which is understood do not apply.

In addition, Kyema Drive residents would like to meet with council to establish a way forward to deal with these sorts of circumstances that continually occur as a result of the absence of the needed controls being implemented by council until such time as the drainage issue is resolved.

Question 1 Response

Thank you for your question John.

The matters you have raised regarding the fence at 32 Kyema Drive, including concerns about compliance with the endorsed plans and potential floodway impacts, will be referred to the City's Planning Investigations team for review via our standard process.

The team will assess the issues raised and respond directly to you regarding the outcome of their investigation and any appropriate next steps.

Thank you for bringing these concerns to our attention.

SUBMITTER 5. BERNIE FRANKE

Subject: Fyansford Planning

Relevant City Department: Growth and Place

Question 1:

Fyansford residents have serious concerns about local planning in Fyansford. Will our council support an independent review into local planning?

Question 1 Response

Thank you for your question Bernie.

The City recognises that planning matters in Fyansford are of significant interest to local residents and that there are a range of views about how growth and development are occurring in the area.

Substantial planning work has been done in the form of Development Plans for The Heights estate and the Gen Fyansford estates – these estates are well underway and include new housing and community facilities.

Strict planning controls protect the riverine environment and unique historical features. The wider area will be shaped by the future Western Geelong Growth Area to the west of the freeway.

Planning decisions are made within the framework established by the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme, Victorian planning legislation and a range of strategic planning policies. These processes include statutory requirements for notification, consultation and opportunities for community input where applicable.

The City is not proposing to undertake an independent review of local planning in Fyansford. We remain committed to listening to community feedback and ensuring planning matters continue to be considered through the established planning and governance processes.

An additional statement was permitted by the Chair:

My family's lived in Fyansford for 22 years. We're wondering what's going on. The Fyansford tip operated for years with an expired planning permit. At the same time the Council was fielding multiple amenity concerns about the site.

Industrial one zone land in Fyansford, its purpose is to provide for the manufacturing industry and the storage and distribution of goods. However, in Fyansford, it seems that we increasingly have other uses that have nothing to do with providing for the manufacturing industry and the storage and distribution. In a recent industrial one zone development, we've seen the usual car parking requirements reduced. So, we have a use with more cars and less parking. Then there's the retrospective planning permit in Fyansford. A site was recently developed in Upper Paper Mill Road, but it has inadequate capacity to handle car parking and now it's causing safety issues. The solution is apparently the retrospective permit.

Ordinary Mum and Dad house block owners in the rural living zone are affected as well. Our neighbour is refused a permit to build a family home on land zoned for the purpose. It's rural living zone. Just down the road and only a year or two later, another block owner in the exact same circumstances somehow gets a permit. What's going on?

Then, there is the waste processing plant. An entirely new waste processing plant appears on the Fyansford tip. No permit. There is an attempt at a retrospective permit. When I put a Freedom of Information request in because we are curious about how this can occur under the nose of Council, I get a response from Council claiming they just can't seem to understand what I'm asking about. Which is why I'm here asking for some light on local planning.

Response:

Mayor Kontelj advised a response will be provided separately.

SUBMITTER 6. GEORGINA QUAYLE (PROXY ALLANAH CHAPPLE)

Subject: Rooming Houses

Relevant City Department: Growth and Place

The chair allowed additional context to be provided by Allanah ahead of asking Georgina's question:

I'm here regarding a development of a rooming house at the moment in East Geelong. The property was sold by my neighbour in July and we were advised by the new owners that it would be renovated. We understand that this development is occurring with an approved building permit under the loophole clause of 52.23 of the Victorian planning provisions. This development or renovation has no sign of it being a building site at all. There's no mandatory signage. There's no fencing, so the neighbourhood had no idea what was happening. Through discreet exploration, we've discovered that it does have a permit. This development involves the conversion of a four bedroom, two bathroom, aged weatherboard home with no overlays into a nine bedroom, nine ensuite rooming house requiring car parking. This development has no signage and no external visibility that it's a building site, so we believe it's been done under the stealth of darkness.

Question 1:

There appears to be a major loophole in rooming houses that directly effect the local community and neighbouring properties I have emailed the council at length posing many questions and have had zero response what are my rights in relation to serious concerns and breaches of public safety? When can I expect to hear back in relation to my concerns at 3 Glen Avenue east Geelong?

I understand Council says the property is permitted. My concern is what happens to neighbouring residents when a four-bedroom house becomes nine-bedroom Class 1b accommodation. Who is responsible for dealing with parking, privacy, overlooking and amenity problems once it's operating, and what rights do we actually have?"

Question 1 Response

Thank you for your question.

The City has received your email dated 10 September 2026 regarding your concerns about the property at 3 Glen Avenue, East Geelong, including matters relating to rooming house provisions, public safety and impacts on neighbouring properties.

Officers are currently reviewing the matters you have raised and will provide a direct response to you. As your enquiry contains a number of detailed questions which require investigation, we will provide you with a detailed written response.

While privacy and overlooking matters are considered by the Private Building Surveyor through the building permit as Rooming Houses are exempt from a planning permit under state regulations, concerns relating to on-street parking are regulated and enforced under the Victorian Road Rules.

Residents have the right to report suspected parking offences to the City for investigation. Matters relating to neighbourhood amenity can be investigated under the City of Greater Geelong's Neighbourhood Amenity Local Law 2024 where they fall within scope.

An additional question was permitted by the Chair:

Can I just ask when the Council will reassess the value of my home as it will drop significantly? When will that occur?

Response provided by CEO Ali Wastie

Thank you for your question.

Council doesn't assess values of property. That is undertaken by the State Government and that's done on an annual basis through the Victorian Auditor General.

SUBMITTER 7. SILVANA BENACCHIO

Subject: Differential Rates

Relevant City Department: Corporate Services

Question 1:

Will you support a separate "Retirement Village Differential Rate", with a reduction of up to 33% for retirement villages that pay rates directly to Council? Retirement Village residents respectfully ask Council to recognise the fairness and equity issues created by the current rating system. Many residents are older Australians living on fixed or carefully managed retirement incomes. They have downsized to remain independent, yet contribute to the City of Greater Geelong community. Importantly, many retirement villages that pay rates directly to Council also fund and maintain their own internal roads, kerbs, footpaths, lighting, gardens, drainage, facilities and other infrastructure. This raises a reasonable question: if residents are paying rates directly to Council while their villages are also providing and maintaining significant infrastructure, is the current rating treatment equitable? Other Victorian Councils, including Brimbank, Frankston, Knox, Melton and Mornington Peninsula, have recognised that retirement villages can warrant different rating treatment. We respectfully ask the City of Greater Geelong Councillors to ensure local retirement village residents receive the same consideration. We ask of the 11 Councillors to support: a formal review of retirement village rating; and consideration of a Retirement Village reduced Differential Rate of up to 33% for villages paying rates directly to Council.

A combined response will be provided after each of the questions on differential rates has been read out. See response at end of submission 10.

SUBMITTER 8. JAN NOREIKA

Subject: Differential Rates

Relevant City Department: Corporate Services

Question 1:

We have made numerous attempts throughout this year to engage with all councillors following our petition for a reduced differential rate for Retirement Villages in the Co GG. What is the reason councillors have not replied to letters sent them? Another letter (two attachments) has now been emailed. Will all councillors give an undertaking that this letter will receive a reply?

A combined response will be provided after each of the questions on differential rates has been read out. See response at end of submission 10.

SUBMITTER 9. JOSEPHINE WOODBURN

Subject: Differential Rates

Relevant City Department: Corporate Services

Question 1:

My submission on behalf of the residents of Armstrong Green Retirement Village is that the City of Greater Geelong give consideration to approving a differential council rate of up to 33% for retirement village residents who live in the greater Geelong area when undertaking your next annual rate review. Rates on my Retirement Village Unit for the 2026 – 2027 financial year are \$2062.05. The capital improved value of land, building and improvements is \$600,000. Rates on a 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom detached dwelling in Currumbin St, Armstrong Creek are \$1947.15. The capital improved value of land, building and improvements is \$550,000. Rates on a 4 bedroom, 2 bathroom detached dwelling in Freshwater Dve, Armstrong creek are \$2278.00. The capital improved value of land, building and improvements is \$625,000. My submission is why are the rates on a retirement village unit in one instance more and another instance less on detached dwellings in the same suburb when retirement village residents through their monthly levy fund services such as: the maintenance and upgrading of sealed roads, footpaths, kerbing, security fencing, stormwater drainage, street furniture, street lighting and common garden areas. Furthermore residents make less use of public facilities such as parks. Council has the legislative authority to act under the provisions of S161 Differential rates of the Local Government Act 1989.

Question 2:

The current capital improved system of valuing land means that retirement village residents are assessed under the same rate as owners of residential properties. ie. 0.00212512. My submission is that retirement village residents are eligible to be assessed under a separate retirement village rate given that council may raise general rates by the application of a differential rate if it uses the capital improved value system of valuing land which the council uses.

A combined response will be provided after each of the questions on differential rates has been read out. See response at end of submission 10.

SUBMITTER 10. ANN DANIELL

Subject: Differential Rates

Relevant City Department: Corporate Services

Question 1:

Why won't Geelong Council give consideration to differential rates for Retirement Villages? I am speaking on behalf of residents of Geelong Grove Retirement Village. You may recall our submissions and petitions earlier this year. Although, as I look around I wonder who is actually listening to our communities. There is a long-standing financial imbalance to the rating system in Geelong. We request Council give serious consideration to the introduction of a differential rating category for retirement villages, offering a 30% discount on standard residential rates. Currently residents in retirement villages pay the same as other ratepayers. When the boundary into a Retirement Village is crossed, the Council's operational footprint disappears. Essential infrastructure is funded out of residents' pockets. Residents pay for and maintain internal infrastructure. Council has absolutely no cost and this must result in a significant reduction in the asset management burden. Another point for consideration is the housing crisis we are currently experiencing. Encouraging more older people to move into Retirement Villages would significantly ease this crisis. A differential rate may be an additional incentive to move. A 30% discounted Differential Rate would recognise Geelong Council's acknowledgment of Villages' reduced consumption of Council services. A 30% reduction would also show empathy for older Residents who are often on quite low fixed incomes. There are numerous progressive local governments across Australia.

Combined Response to Submissions 7 - 10.

Thank you for the questions.

The City acknowledges the important contribution retirement village residents make to our community. We recognise the valuable role retirement villages play in providing housing choice, independence and social connection for older residents.

Council has considered the request for a retirement village differential through petitions, correspondence and meetings with village representatives.

All correspondence received, including the most recent correspondence to Councillors, has been referred to Financial Services to coordinate a response through the City's established processes.

Council's current position does not support a separate reduced differential rate for retirement villages.

Council rates are a property tax based on property value. There are not a user-pays charge based on an individual resident's use of services or infrastructure.

The City acknowledges that retirement villages maintain private roads, footpaths, lighting, gardens and community facilities. These are private assets that form part of the village's accommodation and operating model. Their maintenance does not change residents' access to City services, programs, public infrastructure, libraries, recreation facilities, parks, waste services, local roads and many other services funded through rates.

We have carefully considered the arguments that retirement village residents fund private infrastructure and that many residents are living on fixed incomes. Any reduction of up to 33 per cent would ultimately need to be funded by other ratepayers, including pensioners, older residents living independently, and households experiencing their own cost-of-living pressures.

For this reason, the City does not consider a retirement village differential rate to be a fairer or more equitable outcome for the broader community.