



GLEN EIRA
CITY COUNCIL

BENTLEIGH
BENTLEIGH EAST
BRIGHTON EAST
CARNEGIE
CAULFIELD
ELSTERNWICK
GARDENVALE
GLEN HUNTLY
MCKINNON
MURRUMBEENA
ORMOND
ST KILDA EAST

GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY ADVOCACY PROJECTS 2023–2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Glen Eira City Council acknowledges the Boonwurrung/Bunurong and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation as Traditional Owners and Custodians, and pays respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and uphold Traditional Owner's continuing relationship to the land and waterways. Council extends its respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



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FROM THE MAYOR

Advocacy is where Council speaks or acts on behalf of the Glen Eira community to raise awareness or seek support. As a local government it's one of our most important responsibilities.

In 2022–2023, our advocacy was incredibly successful. We secured more than \$20 million in new funding from other levels of government for Council initiatives — almost 10 per cent of Council's annual operating budget. This funding will go directly to enhancing community services and infrastructure, like now under-construction Carnegie Memorial Swimming Pool and our parks and pavilions.

We also raised the profile of our important policy priorities. We started a sector-wide conversation with other councils on the need for reform to ensure local councils remain financially sustainable in the long term. We put key priorities — like funding for critical services such as the *School Crossing Supervision Program* and maternal and child health services — firmly on the radar for other levels of government. In some cases, this led to meaningful change.

Importantly, we gave the community a chance to be a key part of our advocacy campaigns. As part of our state election advocacy campaign, thousands of people visited our website to learn about our advocacy priorities. Many wrote to their local MP or candidate in support or engaged with our social media ads and e-newsletters. This boosted the credibility of our campaign and helped us to deliver real community outcomes.

But there's still more work to be done. In 2023–2024, we have a real chance to maintain the momentum Glen Eira has created and continue to work toward real change. Whether it's advocating for the sustainability of our environment and climate, the liveability of our city, the wellbeing of our community, or the long-term financial sustainability of our sector, we will continue to be a leading voice for change.

With our community's support, we will continue to advocate for what matters to them.

Cr Jim Magee
Mayor, Glen Eira City Council

OUR COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Council is committed to advocating for projects which are important to our community and deliver measurable results for Glen Eira residents — essential services, better facilities and key infrastructure that will benefit the community. We're focused on ensuring the long-term sustainability of both Council and the broader sector by advocating for reform.

In 2023–2024, Council has renewed its focus on the key priority areas of:

- > sustainability;
- > liveability;
- > community wellbeing; and
- > sector reform, including the financial sustainability of local government.

To continue delivering services and infrastructure into the future, we need other levels of government to:

- > undertake a comprehensive assessment of the financial sustainability of the local government sector in Victoria, to consider the financial challenges that are outpacing their ability to cover costs;
- > establish authentic partnership arrangements with councils to deliver local infrastructure and services which not only meets community needs and expectations, but support the delivery of positive environmental, social and economic outcomes; and
- > deliver long-term sustainability and liveability for our community by planning for a safe climate, transitioning to a circular economy, unlocking and enhancing open space, promoting sustainable transport and integrated transport options and delivering gambling reform.

SUSTAINABILITY



Responding to the climate emergency

The opportunity:

Funding and policy commitments to support urgent and tangible climate action progressing towards our target of zero net Council emissions by 2025, and for our community by 2030.

Councils are in a unique position to understand the impacts of climate change on communities, due to our close connection to local residents and the role that councils play in supporting our communities to prepare for and recover from extreme weather events and other climate impacts.

Councils also play a critical role in responding to the climate emergency by implementing solutions that reduce emissions and promote sustainability.

Investing in renewable energy, promoting sustainable transport, retrofitting buildings, planting trees and encouraging sustainable behaviour can play a role in reducing emissions and reduce our communities' carbon footprint.

What we need:

Council is calling on all levels of government to:

- > expand government rebates, loans and related funding programs to enable more households and businesses to take action to reduce their emissions, particularly assisting the more vulnerable members of our community; and
- > support councils, residents and businesses to transition from fossil-fuel powered technology such as internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles and gas appliances, to electrical alternatives powered by renewable energy.

We support the calls from Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) for establishing a \$200 million local government climate partnership fund for adaptation and mitigation which would provide up to \$40 million for Victorian councils. We urge the Australian and Victorian Governments to establish the fund.

This fund would focus on a range of practical mitigation projects that continue the move toward councils being net zero emitters. Specifically, we are seeking:

- > \$300,000 for converting gas-powered heating and hot water to 100 per cent renewable electricity, at locations such as Carnegie Library and Moorleigh Community Village;
- > \$350,000 for expanding the solar tubes system at GESAC to reduce reliance on gas-heated hot water;
- > \$200,000 for the installation of a demonstration green roof, wall or facade in one of our activity centres;
- > \$1 million in grant funding to implement the key initiatives within *Glen Eira's Urban Forest Strategy*, including Long Street open space and flood mitigation to reduce localised flooding by incorporating water sensitive urban design. The expansion of biodiversity footprints through in-fill tree and understorey planting in a number of Council car parks will also provide urban forest gains. The funding will provide a vital first step to restore our city's tree canopy and acknowledge the vital contribution that urban forests make to the social, ecological and economic health and well-being of the Glen Eira community;
- > funding to adapt our infrastructure to withstand the impacts of climate change, so we can avoid the risks during extreme weather events, such as heatwaves and floods;
- > public health promotion funding to educate on the risks of climate change, particularly the risk of heatwaves on the more vulnerable members of our community; and
- > overall advocacy for the facilitation of electric vehicle infrastructure. This includes funding of \$150,000 for more electric vehicle charging stations at locations including Duncan MacKinnon Reserve and Elsternwick Station.

Community benefits:

Like many councils, Glen Eira faces the ongoing challenges of moving to renewable energy, future proofing infrastructure and protecting the environment at the same time as meeting the needs of a growing population. Increasing trees and vegetation across Glen Eira will provide a range of environmental, economic, social and health benefits which will contribute directly to the sustainability of our community.

Planning for a safer climate

The opportunity:

Council has the responsibility to integrate planning policy to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This will allow us to influence and shape the future environments in which communities will live in. By introducing planning controls, Council can encourage more environmentally sustainable design options, in line with the objectives of our *Climate and Emergency Response Strategy*.

Since 2017, Glen Eira City Council has been a key member of the Victorian Greenhouse Alliances and the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA). EAGA is a collaboration of the Cities of Boroondara, Glen Eira, Knox, Maroondah, Monash, Stonnington, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges, who have joined forces to advocate for reforms that promote environmental sustainability and low carbon communities.

Council also supports planning for a Safe Climate, a campaign co-ordinated by Victorian Greenhouse Alliances in partnership with the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment and is a member of Climate Emergency Australia, a collaboration of more than one hundred councils around Australia calling for a rapid shift to a more resilient, zero-carbon society.



What we need:

Council is advocating for the Victorian Government to:

- > immediately amend the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the *Climate Change Act 2017* to explicitly mandate addressing climate change at all levels of the planning process;
- > use appropriate climate science by adopting science-based targets for high level policy and aligning the Planning Framework to the most up-to-date climate science;
- > commitment to Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD). In July 2022, 24 councils asked the Minister for Planning to authorise the 'elevating ESD' amendment that proposes a specific new control. This control would ensure new developments incorporate more environmentally sensitive design requirements and encourage a move towards net zero carbon development;
- > strengthen emissions reductions targets, policy frameworks and programs, as well as federal and state support for adaption measures at the local government level; and
- > help support local government electrification initiatives, and remove regulatory and market barriers to electrification of households and businesses.

See page 13 — Reforming the planning system.

Community benefits:

Implementing priority actions of *Our Climate Emergency Response Strategy 2021–2025* | *Dhumbali Wurrungi-biik Parbin-ata* will have significant positive community impacts such as:

- > reaching zero emissions for our Council and community, and doing our bit to address the root cause of climate change: and
- > ensuring our local community is safe, resilient, and protected from the worst impacts of climate change.

Transitioning to a circular economy

The opportunity:

Recycling helps conserve energy and natural resources, reduce pollution, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Victorian landfill levies have increased by 91 per cent since 2019–20, but councils have not seen the expected re-investment in waste prevention initiatives. It's financially challenging to comply with kerbside recycling reforms while alternative waste infrastructure is still being built. Melbourne's landfills are reaching capacity, and the cost of managing residual waste may continue to rise.

The adoption of Glen Eira's first *Circular Economy Plan 2022–2026* is a positive step towards reducing waste and increasing the circularity of materials. A lack of investment in recycling infrastructure and end-use options for recycled materials is a significant challenge for Council. The removal of the Victorian Government's Waste and Resource Recovery Groups (WRRGs) has made collaborative procurement difficult.



What we need:

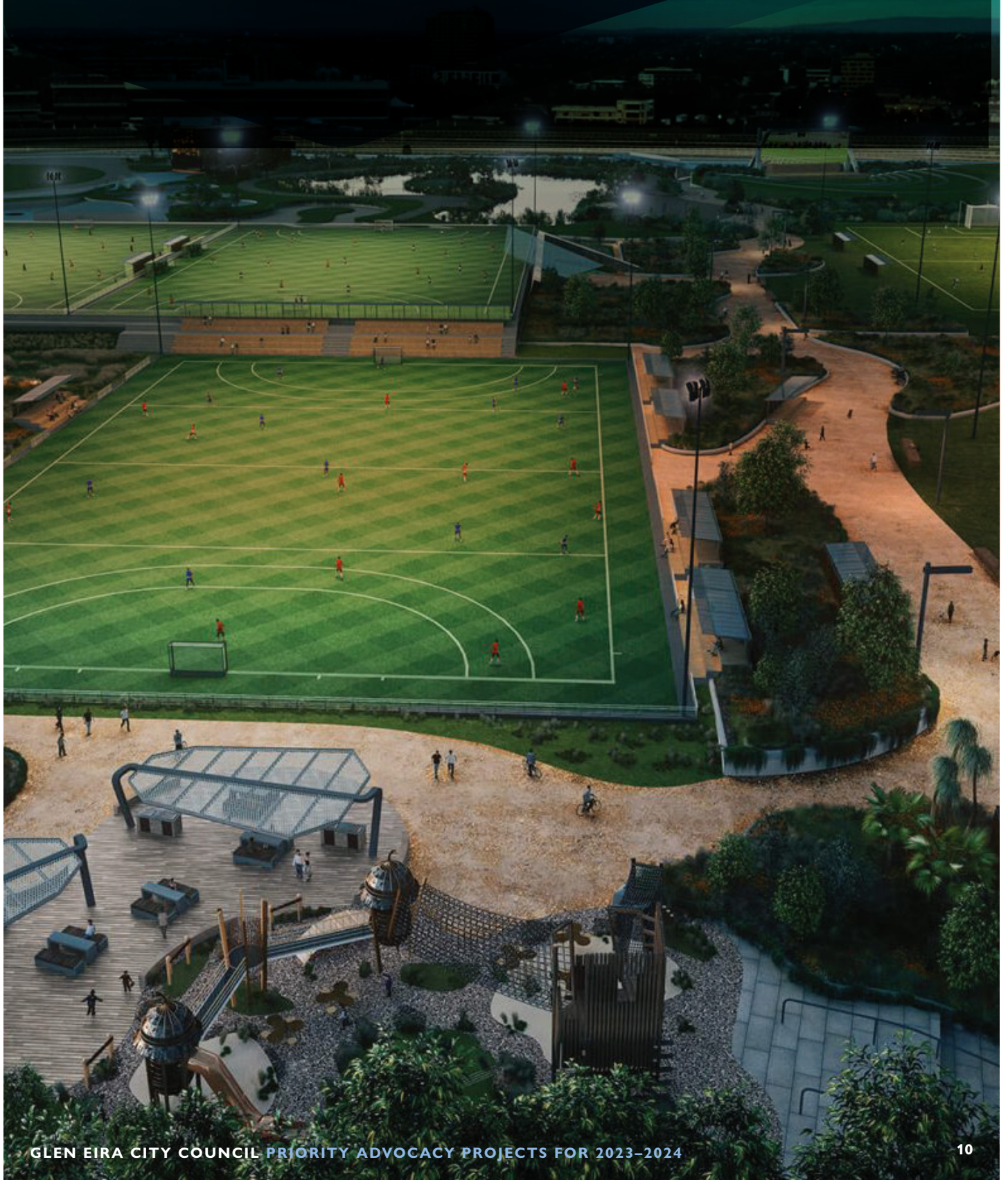
Council is advocating for all levels of government to note the challenges councils across Australia face in sourcing recycled materials for use in public infrastructure and assets, due to a shortage of waste infrastructure and affordability and:

- > increase dedicated funding for recycling infrastructure through the Victorian Sustainability Fund or the Australian Government's Recycling Modernisation Fund, with a focus on boosting market capability to process and manufacture recycled materials;
- > set national targets for the use of recycled content in the construction of public infrastructure;
- > lead and enable collaboration on joint tender procurement opportunities, sharing of expertise, leveraging technology and negotiate cost savings. Collaboration can be a cost-effective way to pool buying power and achieve economies of scale in the procurement of goods and services;
- > invest in the development of recycling infrastructure and to support the development of end markets for recycled materials, including consideration of glass drop off points;
- > improve regulation on commercial recycling to reduce the instances of commercial waste recycling ending up in landfill;
- > prioritise planning legislation to support plans that prioritise the efficient use of space in waste management systems; and
- > provide clear directions on the implementation of the Container Deposit Scheme roll-out, and Council's role in this.

Community benefits:

We can help our residents to recycle by managing the waste challenges of our increasing population, as more people transition to living in smaller homes. Supporting our transition to the circular economy preserves resources for the community for future generations, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and boosts environmental sustainability.

LIVEABILITY



Unlocking more open space

The opportunity:

Funding to support the development of new open space for Glen Eira. Glen Eira's population is expected to reach 180,626 by 2036 and has increasing open space needs. One of our major challenges is providing the quantity of open space needed to meet the needs of our growing community. Glen Eira has the lowest amount of open space per capita in metropolitan Melbourne with 1.3 hectares for every 1,000 residents or 4.4 per cent of the total municipal area. Also, with over 86 sporting groups using Council-owned open space, we can't accommodate the growth of existing clubs or the inclusion of any new clubs.

Open space can play a role in mitigating the effects of climate change. An effective response to climate change requires more open space to support transport corridors, grow our urban forest and cool the City.

What we need:

More funding from other levels of government will enable us to unlock open space and improve the quantity and quality of public open space for our residents; develop, improve, and maintain the amenity of our public places; and provide improved access to a mix of passive and active spaces that are inclusive, fit-for-purpose, and flexible to meet the needs of our diverse community. Council has committed to spending \$26.9 million in acquiring new property for open space by 2025. This is a significant commitment to support a critical under-supply of publicly available open spaces.

Council is also committed to enhancing open space and improving public access at Caulfield Racecourse Reserve. Council partnered with the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust to support the creation of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Land Management Plan. We support the Trust's advocacy for a long-term, sustainable funding stream to deliver the Land Management Plan. We want to ensure the redevelopment includes new multi-purpose spaces and facilities that maximise community access and usage for Glen Eira residents.

We are calling on all levels of government to contribute towards developing open space for our community, including:

- > the creation of new community infrastructure on Crown land at the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve, by creating a reliable funding stream for the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Trust (CRRT) to progress the open space initiatives of the Caulfield Racecourse Reserve Land Management Plan;
- > \$3 million to develop open space at 64–66 Mackie Road, Bentleigh East, building on the Victorian Government's \$3 million commitment to build a new pavilion, which forms a part of the *Mackie Road Reserve Masterplan*. This includes an all abilities play space, multi-purpose facility, upgrades to the sports oval, garden space, seating areas and improving the Orange Street entrance;
- > \$2 million to develop open space at 15–19 Porter Road, Bentleigh;
- > \$4.5 million to develop surplus land purchased from the Victorian Government as part of the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) in Glen Eira;
- > \$4 million to convert Council-owned land in Carnegie into usable open space;
- > the continuation of the Victorian Government's *Suburban Parks Program*;
- > the reform of joint-use agreements to provide greater access to school grounds to meet broader community open space needs;
- > greater involvement in Victorian Government planning decisions, so we can work together to identify and invest in new open spaces. This includes a genuine commitment to investment and partnerships at the building and construction phase, particularly in large infrastructure projects such as the LXRP;
- > partnering with us to create parks and open space infrastructure to meet the needs of our growing populations; and
- > providing higher minimum public space requirements as part of any state-approved planning proposal.

Community benefits:

Open space is highly valued by the Glen Eira community. More open space will provide greater accessibility for residents to pursue recreational activities that contribute to positive health and wellbeing outcomes.

Integrating transport and connectivity

The opportunity:

An integrated transport system can help people travel more efficiently by reducing the time and effort required to switch between different modes of transport. This can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and traffic congestion. Having accessible transport options can make it easier for people to work and live in Glen Eira and promotes more sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling.

What we need:

We are calling for funding commitments to improve the transport network to ensure safe, accessible and sustainable transport options for our community. Council is advocating for:

- > reducing the impacts of climate change by promoting sustainable transport options. This can include investments in public transport infrastructure, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and active transport infrastructure such as bike lanes and footpaths;
- > Council welcomes the Victorian Government's intention to upgrade Caulfield station, but calls for more investment to improve pedestrian access, traffic management and parking around Caulfield Station, to improve the amenity and safety of the area around the station and the inclusion of:
 - the provision of a pedestrian overpass over the railway line with un-ticketed access;
 - progression of the relocation of the Derby Road tram stop;
 - provision of additional secure cycling parking facilities at Caulfield station;
- > \$350,000 to fill in the missing links of the Frankston Rail Trail cycling route;
- > \$3 million to improve pedestrian crossings, including:
 - updating existing school crossings to pedestrian operated signal crossings at Neerim Road, Murrumbeena (Boyd Park Crossing);
 - new pedestrian operated signal crossings at Kooyong Road, between Sycamore and Carlingford Streets in Elsternwick to create a safe crossing for pedestrians including Wesley College students;

- new intersection signals at Patterson and Tucker Roads, Bentleigh, to help pedestrians and students from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College Bentleigh and Tucker Road primary school safely cross Tucker Road and Patterson Road to the shops;
- new raised zebra crossings to improve pedestrian safety at the Victoria Street and Hopetoun Street sections of Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick;
- > improvement in safe integrated transport options for Bentleigh, particularly around the Pedestrian Safe Neighbourhood Project at Coatesville Primary School;
- > supporting the campaign by Vicinity Centres/Monash University for trackless rapid transport from Caulfield to Rowville;
- > prioritise planning and investment in sustainable transport aligned with *Glen Eira City Council Integrated Transport Strategy* objective including, but not limited to;
 - Light Rail or trackless rapid transport (TRT) Elsternwick to Clayton, connecting East Village with Ormond train station and the Monash National Employment Cluster hub;
 - Improved Buses for our 'Bus Only' zone;
 - Implementing the accessible Tram Stops; and
 - Enhanced local bus routes across the municipality.

Community benefits:

Efficient, sustainable and accessible modes of transport benefit the community by reducing travel time and cost and makes it easier for people to move around for work or play. Increasing active transport options (i.e. walking, cycling and public transport) reduces congestion, improves public health outcomes with people being more physically active and has better outcomes for the environment with less pollution and carbon emissions.



Reforming the planning system

The opportunity:

Robust and transparent planning allows for a balance between growth, liveability, sustainability and the heritage of our City. Each level of government has a different role to play in the planning system. At the state level, the Victorian Government controls stamp duty and the governance of the Victorian planning system. Laws like the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* require us to factor in the state and metropolitan planning policy as well as the rules around what can and cannot be included in planning schemes.

The Victorian Government has implemented many changes to the planning system through the *Planning Reform Program 2020–2024* with insufficient consultation and engagement with local government, reduced Council's role as Responsible Authority and resulted in cost shifting to council to administer applications — where government has required council to do work in a referral capacity without any fees or funding.

Councils play a critical role in developing policies, approving developments and providing infrastructure that meets the needs of local communities. Councils are well-placed to contribute their local knowledge and represent their communities interests in planning controls.

Council welcomes more meaningful engagement on any future reforms to the planning system.

What we need:

We are calling for policy and legislative improvements to the Victorian planning system including:

- > a commitment from the Victorian Government to genuinely engage and collaborate with the local government sector on its future *Planning Reform Agenda*. Future changes should aim to streamline the planning process, encourage investment, improve transparency and allow for consultation for all stakeholders;
- > more mandatory controls in the planning scheme to provide greater certainty for permit applicants, Council and the community;
- > more efficient and clearer procedures in preparing developer contribution schemes that reduce the administrative burden on council and time in seeking government approvals;
- > Council is seeking greater transparency around the authorisation process for of planning scheme amendments as well as a reduction in the time taken to authorise an amendment. Having clear timeframes will assist Council in project managing the amendment process, managing budgets, securing necessary resources to manage exhibition and will also assist in communicating the overall amendment timeframes to the community;
- > a commitment to a state-based digital planning application platform for all councils (including a roadmap and clear timings on delivery); and
- > amending the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) rules to require VCAT to apply Council policy when making decisions, rather than merely considering it.

See page 8 — Planning for a safer climate.

Community benefits:

Planning helps us to build a more liveable, sustainability, inclusive and prosperous City. By introducing planning controls, we can encourage more environmentally sustainable design options and by playing a role in the limitation of urban growth on the outer edge of Greater Melbourne, to reduce congestion on our roads and maximise the use of existing infrastructure, we can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. By being more creative in the ways we use the land available, both on public and private land, we can improve environmental outcomes with increased tree planting.

Supplying and funding social and affordable housing

The opportunity:

There is a significant housing crisis in Victoria, with increasing levels of homelessness and housing insecurity. Significant population growth, cost of living pressures and a strong property market are creating a housing crisis with long-term pressure on housing affordability. More Victorians than ever before are currently on waiting lists for social housing, with increasing levels of homelessness and housing insecurity.

What we need:

The current investment in social and affordable housing is insufficient and heavily reliant on council investment. To address this crisis, other levels of government must increase the supply and funding for social and affordable housing in the region. *The Big Housing Build* is a step in the right direction, but there are concerns about its implementation, especially the bypassing of council processes and community input.

We are calling for:

- > a sustainable, long-term pipeline of state and federal investment in social and affordable housing, noting the unmet need for social and affordable housing in Victoria alone has been estimated to be in the order of 75,000 to 100,000 households, while the Australian Government's \$350 million investment in its October 2022–2023 Budget will only deliver 10,000 additional homes by 2029;
- > the Australian Government's investment in the *National Housing Accord* and *Social Housing Accelerator* to prioritise securing land and constructing housing in municipalities with the highest demand for social and affordable housing and lowest percentage of available social housing stock;

- > an uplift in social and affordable dwellings by a minimum of 50 per cent on *Big Housing Build* projects. The minor 10 per cent uplift in social and affordable housing provided on *Big Housing Build* sites is a failure to maximise the significant opportunities created by the program;
- > change to Victorian's planning schemes to include new mandatory criteria for developers to contribute funding and/or dwellings for affordable housing through the inclusionary zone provisions and *Homes for Homes*, or similar contribution programs where inclusionary zone provision doesn't apply;
- > a requirement for any *Big Housing Build* development to adhere to relevant planning controls associated with building heights, setbacks, and other controls;
- > upfront consideration of the impact on existing infrastructure from increased density created by *Big Housing Build* investments and the resulting uplift in site values, to ensure community and infrastructure needs are addressed;
- > direct government investment and subsidies to encourage private investment in social and affordable housing;
- > government funding made available to local government as well as the community housing sector, for the redevelopment of social housing sites;
- > significant investment in ageing social housing stock to deliver contemporary housing solutions; and
- > funding to address the lack of available sites in Glen Eira and seek alternatives including at 'value capture' developments generated by opportunities created by level crossing removal or other state property acquisitions, noting that social housing only accounts for 1.4 per cent of all dwellings in Glen Eira which is significantly lower than the Melbourne average of 3.3 per cent, and the estimated current unmet need for affordable housing in Glen Eira is 5,883 dwellings.

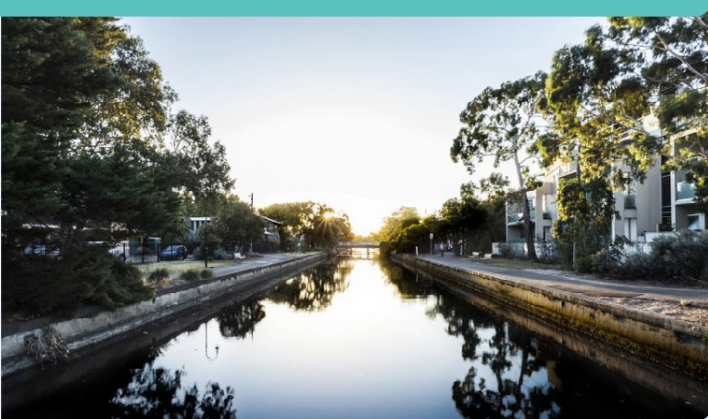
Community benefits:

Social and affordable housing developments contribute towards improved social inclusion, mobility and access to jobs. This is a key element of maintaining income equality and sustainable economic growth.

Elster Creek Catchment Collaboration

The opportunity:

As a member of the Elster Creek Catchment Collaboration, Glen Eira City Council is advocating for better flood management for the Elster Creek catchment. The Elster Creek catchment collects run-off from the inner south and drains to Port Phillip Bay at Elwood. The creek is known to flood and is expected to continue to flood in the future. Climate change will increase the risk of more severe flooding throughout the catchment. Future developments in the inner south will also increase urban runoff.



What we need:

Glen Eira City Council has partnered with Melbourne Water and Bayside, Kingston and Port Phillip City Councils to advocate for a better approach and more funding for flood management, which includes advocating to the Victorian Government for:

- > funding to deliver major flood mitigation infrastructure under the *Elster Creek Catchment Flood Management Plan 2019–2024*; and
- > all state-owned property developments or redevelopments in the catchment to invest in flood mitigation.

Community benefits:

Flooding has a major financial, environment, safety, and liveability impact for Glen Eira residents. Each year, flooding causes \$550,000 in damage to property and infrastructure.

This is projected to increase to over \$1 million dollars a year by 2100 due to the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events.



COMMUNITY WELLBEING



Redeveloping Carnegie Memorial Swimming Pool

The opportunity:

The Carnegie Memorial Swimming Pool holds a significant nostalgic sense of place for the community. Through a major redevelopment, we are building an intergenerational asset for the community to boost community wellbeing. The new design will incorporate historic references to retain its important connection to our past.



What we need:

Development of Carnegie Memorial Swimming Pool is the highest priority advocacy initiative for Glen Eira. Council is seeking:

> new funding commitments from the Victorian Government to contribute to progressing the project, following the Australian Government's \$15 million commitment to the project, including:

- \$7.5 million to construct the 50m pool;
- \$2 million to construct the dive pool;
- \$2.5 million to construct the warm water pool;
- \$2.3 million to construct the learn to swim pool;
- \$700,000 to construct the splashpad;
- \$500,000 to construct the concourse spa; or
- \$120,000 to construct the steam room and sauna.

Community benefits:

The pool will be more than just a place to swim. It will be a community amenity that offers a range of benefits to improve physical and mental wellbeing. With an expected 300,000 community visits annually, the pool will provide access for 2,800 learn-to-swim enrolments, 100,000 visits to a therapeutic warm water pool, and will also host 30 school swimming carnivals and events each year.

The new facility will include open spaces, a café, barbecue, and shaded seating areas, making it a great place for recreational and social gatherings. The pool will be designed with environmental sustainability in mind, with plans to achieve a 6-star Green Star rating. It will be designed for climate resilience, low energy operations, and maximum water efficiency.

The design of the precinct will make use of existing open space, which is a critical benefit for the municipality with the amount of open space per person in metropolitan Melbourne.

Reforming rooming house regulations

The opportunity:

The demand for local rooming house accommodation in Glen Eira continues to increase, along with growing concerns from neighbours, the community, and authorised officers regarding the safety of local rooming houses. A significant complexity is the multitude of agencies that have responsibility for monitoring and controlling rooming houses.



What we need:

There is an opportunity to establish one agency with the legislative mandate to enforce a single set of standards for rooming houses in Victoria. A single agency could develop a clear understanding of the challenges and increase the minimum standards to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of rooming house residents.

Council is seeking:

- > legislative and policy reform from the Victorian Government to improve arrangements for the monitoring and control of standards for rooming houses; and
- > more suitable, secure and safe accommodation for people experiencing housing stress and homelessness, particularly families with young children, women escaping domestic violence, people with chronic health and mental health issues, the elderly and recent arrivals to Australia.

Community benefits:

Rooming houses offer accommodation for many low income and disadvantaged members of the community, particular for those who cannot access, afford or sustain a tenancy in the private rental market. Addressing the quality and standard of accommodation in rooming houses will lead to a greater sense of security and safety whilst residents seek more permanent accommodation.

Reforming gambling regulations

The opportunity:

Through reform and regulation of the gambling industry, the Victorian Government can ease the burden caused by health, financial, relationship, emotional, psychological, work, study and criminal harms.



What we need:

Council joins with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), other councils and many other organisations as a founding supporter of the Alliance for Gambling Reform, which seeks to campaign for reforms to the gambling industry to reduce harm from poker machines and to protect disadvantaged communities from increasing numbers of poker machines. Some of the issues arise from:

- online gambling is the fastest growing segment of the gambling market and has significantly increased by 300 per cent following the coronavirus pandemic;
- gambling harm is a major public health issue and has profound impacts particularly on young people, who are actively targeted by the gambling industry;
- Australia has the highest rate of gambling losses per person in the world;
- in March 2023, Victorians posted losses of more than \$247 million in one month; and
- polling shows that 71 per cent of Australians support a ban on TV gambling advertisements.

Council is calling on the Victorian Government to:

- > implement the Alliance for Gambling Reform pokies agenda, including a suite of complementary harm reduction measures — such as changes to opening hours of venues, introduction of 'End Gambling Harm After Dark', a request to have all gaming machines turned off between 2am and 6am and the introduction of a full, universal and binding pre-commitment system by having each person set their own reasonable time and money limits;
- > strengthen regulation for online gambling, including banning all forms of online/telephone gambling with credit;
- > promote and improve treatment and referrals for people experiencing gambling harm; and
- > advocate to the Australian Government for an adequately funded national regulatory structure, banning of gambling ads, as well as national promotion of the new self-exclusion scheme, Betstop!

Community benefits:

A clear benefit will be a reduction in the significant impacts of problem gambling faced by families and children including financial insecurity, family stress, poor access to essential household items and the need to sell property and/or other household items to cope with the losses associated with problem gambling.

Fairly funding the School Crossing Supervision Program

The opportunity:

Across the City, we have 38 schools and 73 school crossings. They're staffed by 91 hardworking school crossing supervisors.

The *School Crossing Supervision Program* was introduced in 1975 under a joint funding arrangement between the Victorian Government and councils. But right now, the *School Crossing Supervision Program* isn't sustainable because the Victorian Government doesn't pay its fair share.

The Victorian Government is meant to fund the program on 50:50 basis with councils. In recent years, their contribution has been as little as 30 per cent. That's making it harder for us to deliver the program and putting its future — and children's safety — at risk.

In response to pressure from councils in 2022, the state committed to increasing the funding back to 50:50 — but only for a single year. The state hasn't committed to providing its fair share of funding beyond 2024.

What we need:

We are calling on the Victorian Government to fully fund the *School Crossing Supervision Program* as an essential, state-led, community safety initiative. Council usually funds nearly 69 per cent of the \$1.33 million program in staff costs alone, versus the state's 31 per cent.

Community benefits:

The presence of a school crossing supervisor improves safety for children crossing busy roads by ensuring children cross safely and that drivers see them and slow down. School crossing supervisors help to regulate traffic flow around schools and can promote a sense of safety and wellbeing among students, parents and other members of the community.



Delivering sustainable maternal and child health services

The opportunity:

Victorian Government funding for the maternal and child health (MCH) service is based on an outdated funding model and has not kept pace with the increasing costs of delivering the service. The Victorian Government contributes less than its 50 per cent share of funding to deliver the service. This impacts the sustainability of the service and its ability to provide support at critical life stages for children and parents.



What we need:

Council's MCH service is a critical service for families with young children. It provides free, universally accessible, health and wellbeing and development support for all families with children from birth to school age. As well as providing general guidance and support, MCH nurses play a critical role in early intervention where there are concerns about health and development.

Council is calling on the Victorian Government to:

- > review its funding model to MCH which has not kept pace with the increased cost of service delivery;
- > increase its contribution by 15 per cent to return to 50:50 funding (source: Municipal Association of Victoria, 2022). While the funding is meant to be a 50:50 split, local governments contribute more than 50 per cent of the funding required. The Victorian Government recently increased its contribution by only 2.54 per cent to \$126.38 per hour of service, which still falls short of its 50 per cent contribution when councils contribute \$142.79 per hour of service;
- > review Key Ages and Stages appointment times to increase the time allocation, to cater for the cumulative increases in the responsibilities added over the past decade and respond to increasing levels of vulnerability and complexity of families in all communities;
- > establish and fund an MCH workforce strategy to maintain ongoing delivery of the service; and
- > establish a capital grant funding program for MCH facilities.

Community benefits:

MCH centres play a crucial role in promoting the well-being of mothers and children in a community.

They offer health education, early intervention, and support for vulnerable populations. These centers foster community connections and contribute to overall well-being in the community.

LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



Delivering sustainable services for the long-term

The opportunity:

Council is committed to providing high-quality services to our residents and visitors now and into the future. But right now, costs are increasing faster than we can cover. For all councils — including Glen Eira — it's becoming tougher to operate and we need to plan now for our long-term sustainability.

Councils deliver far more than roads, rates and rubbish. We deliver more than 120 different services to our community. We are working in an environment that is becoming more challenging to operate. Our long-term sustainability is not guaranteed as costs are increasing faster than councils can cover. While inflation is at above six per cent, council rates are capped by the Victorian Government at just 3.5 per cent in 2023–2024 — 0.5 per cent below the Essential Services Commission's recommendation.

At the same time, the Victorian Government is shifting the cost of critical services — like maternal and child health services and school crossing supervision — through outdated funding models that see us wearing 70 per cent of the cost of programs purported to be 50:50.

Cost shifting happens when other levels of government:

- > **reduce, in real terms, payments to local government but maintain a requirement for the same level of service delivery; or**
- > **require councils to perform new functions without adequate resources.**

In the past two years, the cost of providing services has soared. Inflation and construction costs are making it harder to build and maintain infrastructure. Every project that we put out to tender last year came in at 10 to 20 per cent above what we had planned for before inflation really took hold. While councils collect only 3.8 per cent of taxes, we manage one third of the nation's infrastructure. This will only get harder with predicted inflation levels and interest rate hikes.

What we need:

To ensure Council has the financial capacity to deliver services for its community, the extent of cost shifting to councils must be addressed. Council is leading the charge for reform and advocating for the Victorian Government to:

- > link the setting of the annual rate cap to accurately reflect the impact of rising costs for local councils to deliver services and infrastructure;
- > streamline the current complex approach for Council to lodge submissions for a variation in rate cap;
- > undertake a comprehensive assessment of the short, medium and long-term financial sustainability of the local government sector in Victoria, which considers factors such as the impact of cost shifting, rate capping, interest rate rises and costs increases, particularly in building and construction;
- > provide adequate funding for Council to deliver essential services where levies have increased or state or federal regulations have created further costs. This may include landfill and waste services, urban stormwater management, electrical line clearance, liability for combustible cladding and climate change mitigation;
- > ensure a minimum of 50:50 funding models for the *School Crossing Supervision Program*, libraries and maternal and child health services;
- > recognise the significant impact that the Best Start, Best Life reform has on Council, and requests both long-term funding streams as well as fully funded options, where government takes responsibility for the costs of expanding kindergarten facilities to facilitate government's kindergarten reform. This also needs to address the growing gap in funding for the administration and maintenance of kindergartens, particularly where peppercorn rents apply to benefit the community;
- > address the funding gap for maintaining and building new infrastructure, particularly to support population growth, climate change mitigation and rising costs, noting that Glen Eira's population is expected to reach 180,626 by 2036;
- > \$200,000 per annum to fund the growing gap for immunisation services. Council fully funds influenza vaccines for staff and residents over 65;
- > provide planning support where planning reform has reduced the involvement of councils as primary decision-makers but still expects them to undertake work in a referral capacity without fees or funding, noting Council's advocacy for a commitment from the Victorian Government to genuinely engage and collaborate with the local government sector on planning decisions;
- > fund or increase fees to support the first series of proposed building reforms regarding combustible cladding and orphaned building permits;
- > provide additional resources to support Council's Municipal Building Surveyor; and
- > the continuation of interest free loans.

Delivering sustainable services for the long-term continued

Community benefits:

Financial sustainability is critical for local councils to effectively deliver services, build community resilience, enhance fiscal responsibility and stimulate economic growth. It allows Council to provide better and consistent services to the community, invest in infrastructure to improve the quality and availability of services to the community and create an environment for a strong local economy.

Providing community services such as immunisations, kindergartens, aged care facilities and maternal health centres supports the community's health and well-being. Initiatives like climate change mitigation, urban planning reform, recycling and integrated transport options support valuable improvements for the sustainability, liveability and community well-being of all those who work, live or travel in Glen Eira. These services can only continue to be delivered if local governments are sustainability and other levels of government stop shifting their costs.





GLEN EIRA
CITY COUNCIL

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National Relay Service

If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired,
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