

ITEM 9.3 ELSTERNWICK STRUCTURE PLAN

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Attachments: 1. *Elsternwick Structure Plan 2018-2031*
2. *Elsternwick Draft Structure Plan Consultation Overview*

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council adoption of the *Elsternwick Structure Plan* and to immediately commence statutory implementation of the *Plan*.

This report outlines how the *Elsternwick Structure Plan* addresses the key concerns raised over the final two rounds of community engagement, as well as the how the *Plan* aligns with the shared future vision for Elsternwick, which was adopted by Council in July 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. adopts the *Elsternwick Structure Plan 2018-2031* as Council policy;
2. requests Council officers to commence preparing the statutory documentation, and any further supporting documentation required, to implement the *Elsternwick Structure Plan 2018-2031* into the *Glen Eira Planning Scheme* through a future Planning Scheme Amendment;
3. requests Council officers to seek interim planning controls that implement all relevant built form measures as outlined in the *Elsternwick Structure Plan 2018-2031* and *Quality Design Guidelines* into the *Glen Eira Planning Scheme* through a Planning Scheme Amendment in accordance with Section 20(4) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*;
4. begins the development of a detailed implementation plan that will inform future Council capital budgets;
5. undertakes appropriate communications that:
 - a. acknowledges and thanks all submitters, stakeholders and members of the wider community for their significant contribution to the preparation of the *Elsternwick Structure Plan 2018-2031*;
 - b. outlines Council's resolution on the *Elsternwick Structure Plan 2018-2031*;
 - c. outlines how the adopted *Elsternwick Structure Plan 2018-2031* addresses the key concerns raised in consultation; and
 - d. outlines the next steps, in particular the future Planning Scheme Amendment timeframes.

BACKGROUND

In July 2017, following three rounds of community engagement, Council adopted a shared, long-term vision for Elsternwick, which states that:

'Elsternwick will be a safe, accessible and livable centre that embraces its historic character and strong cultural and village feel.

The centre will be a destination for its longstanding cultural and entertainment offerings, business and employment opportunities, and a range of quality local retail outlets and community spaces.'

This shared future vision has strongly guided the development of the *Elsternwick Structure Plan 2018-2031* (attachment 1).

The *Elsternwick Structure Plan* outlines a new plan for 2031 that guides future land use, buildings, public spaces, parking and movement in line with the community's shared future vision.

While the *Elsternwick Structure Plan* seeks to achieve many important objectives, at its core it achieves the following critical milestones for the current and future community:

1. Stronger protection of Elsternwick's heritage character
2. New public spaces to harness Elsternwick's culture and street life
3. Ensure larger developments provide significant community benefit

1. Stronger protection of Elsternwick's heritage character

Community feedback has clearly shown that the Glenhuntly Road shopping precinct strongly defines and represents the Elsternwick community, through its unique combination of:

- heritage street fronts and buildings;
- strong Jewish heritage and culture;
- independent boutiques;
- traditional Jewish cake shops and bakeries;
- modern cafes and restaurants;
- important cultural facilities such as the Jewish Holocaust Centre;
- community facilities such as the Elsternwick Library; and
- entertainment such as the Classic Cinema.

The Elsternwick shopping precinct is truly unique in wider Melbourne. The shopping strip has an existing heritage overlay, which seeks to preserve the unique and intact heritage streetscape. Despite this heritage protection, recent VCAT approvals have seen a number of taller buildings of up to 8 storeys being constructed in the shopping strip.

When justifying taller buildings in the heritage overlay, VCAT has pointed to the lack of alternative priority development areas in Elsternwick to accommodate the centre's future growth. If this current development trend continues, the heritage precinct is in danger of being significantly eroded by, or lost to, major development.

The residential areas to the north of Glenhuntly Road are largely protected by a Heritage Overlay and those to the south by a Neighbourhood Character Overlay. However, a large part of the closer residential areas just north and south of Glenhuntly Road are zoned for

growth, allowing 4 storey apartment buildings. This presents a significant conflict in policy which seeks to achieve two opposite objectives.

The *Elsternwick Structure Plan* has the difficult task of finding a solution that balances the need for development in Elsternwick with the long held, strong community desire to protect the heritage fabric of the neighbourhood.

In order to preserve the heritage significance of the core of Elsternwick, growth needs to be accommodated in alternative areas (not affected by a heritage area overlay). The *Elsternwick Structure Plan* identifies a new urban renewal precinct of current commercial land, located between the railway line and the Nepean Highway as an appropriate area for managed growth.

Through recent community consultation, the neighbouring residents have made it very clear the concerns regarding the taller buildings in the urban renewal areas, which include overlooking, overshadowing, visual bulk and traffic impacts.

The benefit of large urban renewal precincts, such as the existing car yards in Elsternwick, is that many of these adverse impacts can be managed within the site. The *Elsternwick Structure Plan* sets out clear key design principles, including:

- minimise overshadowing to existing residential sites;
- minimise overlooking to existing residential sites;
- minimise traffic and parking impacts on existing residential streets;
- appropriate transition to existing residential streets; and
- respond to surrounding heritage and neighbourhood character areas.

The updated building heights plan addresses these principles, in particular seeking to manage overlooking and overshadowing onto existing residential sites. It is also a measured response to the concerns raised by neighbours through the engagement process.

This new urban renewal precinct seeks to accommodate growth in a location that will not erode the Elsternwick shopping strip's heritage and cultural character, while also delivering a significant positive legacy for the wider Elsternwick community, such as new open space and greater employment opportunities. It is felt that this approach finds the required balance to achieve the right outcome for this area and the wider Elsternwick community.

2. New public spaces to harness Elsternwick's culture and street life

Elsternwick is a unique cultural destination. It serves not only the local Jewish community and Elsternwick neighbourhood, but also wider Melbourne who visit the cultural and entertainment venues. The *Elsternwick Structure Plan* seeks to significantly improve the visitor experience by creating a series public spaces that allow Elsternwick's street life and culture to safely spill out onto the street in key locations.

Building on the success of the Elsternwick Plaza upgrade, new spaces will be created in Selwyn and Gordon Streets to strengthen the cultural and entertainment precinct around the train station.

Focused around the Holocaust Museum, the Selwyn Street upgrade will be inspired by European Jewish squares by widening the footpaths and making the majority of the street one-way. Every year, Selwyn Street is closed to hold a number of cultural events, including the Jewish culture street festival *In One Voice*, which in 2017 has more than 7,000 participants. It is hoped that investing in this new public space will be a catalyst for greater cultural uses in Selwyn Street and the wider precinct.

Just next to Selwyn Street, a new plaza is envisaged across the railway line and Gordon Street which will connect the train station with the Classic Cinema. This new plaza will create a new, safe night-time precinct in the heart of Elsternwick.

Further along Glenhuntly Road, new public spaces are planned for Carre Street and Staniland Grove. Linked by a new pedestrian crossing, these new public spaces will significantly improve pedestrian safety, while also creating inviting green spaces, with canopy trees and seating.

New green parklands are recommended on the Elsternwick Library car park site, within the urban renewal precinct and on the Gordon Street ABC studio site.

In total, the Elsternwick *Structure Plan* seeks to achieve an additional 21,500 square metres of new public open space.

3. Ensure larger developments provide significant community benefit

Council has clearly heard the community's concern regarding development. While most of the community recognise the need for it, the location, design quality and community legacy of the current development has been questioned.

The *Elsternwick Structure Plan* seeks to refocus Elsternwick's development focus from the small heritage shopfronts or house blocks to larger strategic or urban renewal sites where greater height can be accommodated.

Importantly, with greater opportunity for height also comes a greater opportunity for taller development to leave a positive and lasting legacy for the existing and emerging Elsternwick community.

The *Structure Plan* establishes a preferred and maximum height for buildings in these precincts. Proposed buildings should not exceed the preferred height. Proposals seeking to extend the preferred height must demonstrate a significant community benefit (to Council's satisfaction) and must not exceed the maximum height.

Community benefit items may include but are not limited to:

- diverse housing mix that responds to an identified community need (affordable housing, aged care, student, short-term accommodation – not just a variety of apartment layouts and sizes);
- additional public parking;
- additional public open space contributions beyond their minimum requirements of the *Glen Eira Planning Scheme* or relevant adopted Council document;
- new street or laneway connections; and
- needed community uses and facilities.

This list does not identify every type of community benefit, but rather notes emerging priority items. Contributions for each development should be determined in consultation with Council for the best strategic outcome and will be clarified through future strategic work.

State and Council Policy

Council has a responsibility to both implement the vision and objectives of the community as set out in the *Glen Eira Council and Community Plan 2017-2021* while also being required to align with the strategies and directions set out in the State Government's *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* strategy. In July 2017, Council adopted the *Activity Centre, Housing and Local*

Economy Strategy 2017 which seeks to create a strong link between the community's and the State's aspirations.

The *Glen Eira Council and Community Plan 2017-2021* outlines a clear direction for Glen Eira, in particular the *Liveable and well designed* theme states the following objectives:

- Create prosperous, accessible and vibrant urban places.
- Encourage development that benefits the community.
- Proactively plan for and manage change within our urban places.
- Invest sustainably in our infrastructure and community assets.

The State Government's *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* is the metropolitan planning strategy that sets the vision and policy direction for managing growth across Melbourne. Consistent with longstanding State policy, the revised *Plan Melbourne* shows a plan to accommodate population growth across the state, by focussing greater development opportunities in major centres within the inner and middle regions that are in close proximity to well-serviced public transport and employment areas.

Plan Melbourne identifies Elsternwick as a major activity centre that should accommodate increased housing and employment growth. This is due to its location in an established area with good access to public transport and other services.

The *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy*, provides Council with an integrated plan to successfully accommodate this growth in a way that revitalises and strengthens our local neighbourhoods and their surrounding communities.

The *Strategy* establishes a new policy direction for the future planning of Glen Eira. In particular it identifies urban renewal areas in Glen Eira that have greater capacity for increased residential and employment development, due to their location adjacent to arterial roads and within established commercial precincts. The identification of these urban renewal areas allows for reconsideration of development planning in residential areas that are more sensitive.

The *Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy* identifies Elsternwick as a major activity centre with urban renewal opportunities. This new classification recognises that the Elsternwick activity centre has significant and well-located commercially zoned land that can accommodate taller development. Development in identified urban renewal and strategic sites should seek to accommodate new employment, diverse housing, open space and other community benefits.

ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

Consultation on the Draft Concept and Draft Structure Plans

At the 25 July 2017 Council Meeting, Council endorsed the release of the *Draft Elsternwick Concept Plan* for two rounds of community engagement.

Subsequently, Council officers undertook two rounds of consultation, between July and December 2017, firstly on the *Draft Concept Plans* and then on an updated *Draft Structure Plan*.

The key issues raised by the community during these two rounds of consultation are further discussed below:

1. Urban renewal area

Community feedback:

The urban renewal section of the *Draft Structure Plan* received significant community feedback, with 417 submissions received, largely concerning the impact on existing residential areas including overshadowing, overlooking, visual bulk, traffic and neighbourhood character impacts. Officers also met one-on-one with many of the affected landowners and residents in the precinct.

Two options regarding the extent of change were presented during consultation. Option one proposed to limit the urban renewal development to mainly commercially zoned land and option two sought broader urban renewal areas based on precincts. Many respondents felt that neither option addressed their concerns for the area, and that a third option should be developed. Others suggested that instead of an urban renewal precinct, development should be spread out across Elsternwick.

Officer recommendation:

Officers have undertaken a significant review of the urban renewal area in order to address the various issues raised by the community. In particular, community concerns relating to overlooking, overshadowing, visual bulk and traffic were investigated further.

The urban renewal precincts were identified due to their ability to address these concerns. The large size of the commercially zoned land, and their location along arterial roads, means that in future, well designed, higher density development can successfully manage amenity impacts within the precinct.

Upon review, officers felt that while the *Draft Structure Plan* described the future opportunities of the urban renewal precincts, it did not adequately outline how amenity concerns highlighted through community consultation would be addressed through any future change. Officers have therefore undertaken a comprehensive update to the urban renewal section with the key changes outlined below.

The urban renewal north precinct has been reduced in scope and height, by limiting taller development mainly to the larger commercially zoned land. The residential areas north and south of Glenhuntly Road have been significantly reduced from the proposed urban renewal heights, to instead align with the existing planning controls of 4 storeys.

The urban renewal south precinct has been reduced in scope and height, in order to:

- provide a clear transition in height from lower-scale contexts to the north (proposed 6 storeys near Alexandra Avenue) and west (proposed 4 storeys near St James Parade);
- protect the future open space in accordance with Council's *Open Space Strategy*, with no overshadowing for a minimum of 5 hours at the September Equinox (9am to 2pm achieved) and 3 hours at Winter Solstice (11am to 2pm achieved);

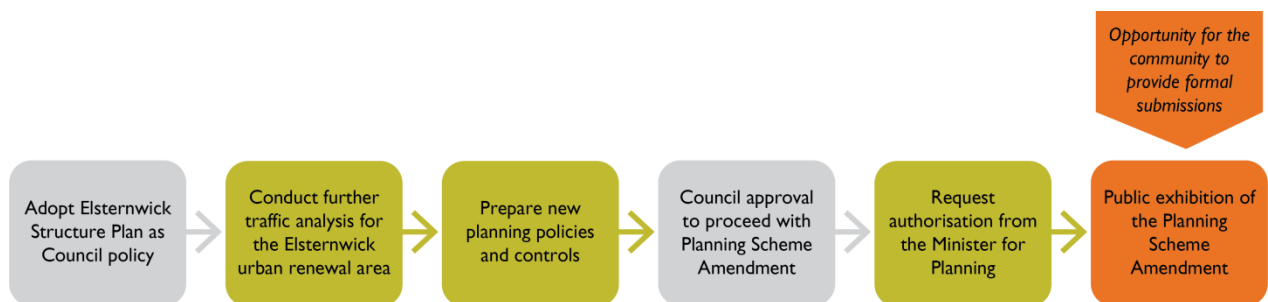
- ensure no overshadowing of residential areas between 9am and 3pm at the September Equinox, including:
 - properties nearby in Alexander, Oak and Elm Avenues and Marmara Drive;
 - properties across the railway line along St James Parade in Elsternwick; and
 - properties in the City of Bayside across Nepean Highway.

- focus taller development to sites fronting Nepean Highway and provide a transition in height at its edges. Preferred and maximum heights have been refined (in line with overshadowing measures) as outlined below:
 - preferred 4 storeys and maximum 6 storeys – between Alexander and Oak Avenues; and
 - preferred 8 storeys and maximum of 10 and 12 storeys – south of Oak Avenue.

- the surrounding residential area is recommended to be Garden townhouse instead of the proposed Garden apartment (apart from the residential block immediately south of Alexander Avenue). This change is considered to enable future change that is more respectful of the existing residential character, while also the enabling the appropriate growth and transition in this precinct to address the changing context.

New principles have also been included in the urban renewal section that reflects the concerns and opportunities raised through the community feedback periods. Officers consider that the new plans align with these principles while also providing for reasonable building envelopes at the upper-most floors (avoiding tall and narrow buildings). Further to this, the *Quality Design Guidelines* also outline building design requirements for urban renewal buildings that address concerns of overlooking and visual bulk at residential interfaces.

With regard to traffic concerns, a new principle has been added to stating that urban renewal development should '*minimise traffic and parking impacts on existing residential streets*'. The *Structure Plan* does not provide detailed resolutions of how to achieve this objective, instead, officers will undertake detailed transport exploration with State transport authorities, once Council has adopted a final *Plan*. The process to achieve this includes additional community consultation following more detailed traffic analysis, as detailed in the diagram below.



With regard to suggestions that the urban renewal precincts should not proceed and instead development should be spread throughout Elsternwick, officers note that this is largely the status quo - where planning policy seeks to both protect the established heritage and character areas, while also encouraging development in central Elsternwick. As identified earlier in this paper, this policy conflict has seen VCAT approving very tall buildings in heritage protected areas, significantly eroding Elsternwick’s highly valued character.

For this reason, the establishment of the Elsternwick urban renewal precinct is critical in strengthening the protection of Elsternwick's large and established character and heritage areas, by repositioning Elsternwick's required future growth to commercially zoned land not affected by precinct wide heritage or character overlays. The urban renewal precinct is also a rare opportunity to design for our future community needs, such as local employment, sustainable transport, diverse housing and open space.

2. Protect heritage and character

Community feedback:

A number of submissions were received, either raising concerns regarding the residential interface with shop-top or larger strategic sites or regarding the heritage status of various buildings.

Officer recommendation:

As outlined earlier in this paper, the protection of the heritage character of Elsternwick has been the first priority of the *Structure Plan*. The *Structure Plan* seeks to provide clarity, by clearly stating where heritage character is sought to be protected and enhanced, and where higher density development is encouraged.

The *Elsternwick Structure Plan* states that where higher density development abuts a sensitive interface (such as heritage or low-scale residential sites) development must be sympathetic to the scale and amenity of the site.

The *Structure Plan* also states that further investigation of sites of potential heritage significance within Elsternwick will be undertaken following adoption as part of a wider, municipal heritage review.

With regard to character, officers undertook further exploration of three key areas identified through consultation to inform updates to the *Structure Plan*:

Eastern end of Glenhuntly Road

Officers have undertaken a further review of the Glenhuntly Road corridor and made the following changes:

- Consistent podium height of two storeys along Glenhuntly Road to continue the look and feel of the heritage strip.
- Fine-grain commercial properties at the corner of Hopetoun Street have been amended to Heritage/character shop-top.
- Maximum building height of the strategic site on the eastern side of Yorston Court, has been reduced to 6 storeys, in order to better transition down to the adjacent existing residential area.
- Maximum building height of shop-top, between Shoobra Road and Victoria Street, has been reduced to 3 storeys.
- Corner properties have been removed from the Strategic site building type and replaced with Heritage/character shop-top with a maximum building height of 4 storeys.
- Residential property has been removed from the Shop-top building type.

North side of Stanley Street

Officers have also undertaken a detailed review the properties from 12 to 20 Stanley Street. The current planning policy presents a conflict of policy by prescribing the Residential Growth Zone and the Neighbourhood Character Overlay.

In other areas within the Neighbourhood Character Overlay, the *Structure Plan* aims to resolve this conflict by replacing the Residential Growth Zone with a lower order zone.

However, upon review, taking this approach on the north side of Stanley Street is not recommended due to the surrounding context to the immediate north, east and west of these sites. This group of five sites may (ultimately) be surrounded by development of 4 to 8 storeys. To the east and west of these sites, the northern side of Stanley Street will see significant change in scale and character. The *Structure Plan* envisages a robust urban outcome, including the development of both of the existing at-grade car parks.

It is acknowledged that, while the sites are located within an area of change, they do have a relationship to the Neighbourhood Character area to the south. In addition, 18 Stanley Street is affected by a site-specific heritage overlay. It is therefore recommended that a nuanced approach is taken to managing built form on these sites.

It is recommended that the Neighbourhood Character Overlay be removed from these sites. Officers recommend that a lower 3 storey development occur either side of the heritage property at 18 Stanley Street, while a Garden apartment style can be accommodated at 12 to 14 Stanley Street. This aligns with the current zoning and would assist in providing a positive frontage to a future upgraded Carre Street. It will also positively respond to the existing Neighbourhood Character area opposite.

ABC Gordon Street Site

The ABC Gordon Street precinct has been updated to more strongly advocate for the retention of the buildings and continuation of creative employment at the precinct.

Updates to the *Plan* include:

- investigation of the heritage value of the buildings;
- future use to make a positive contribution to the Elsternwick community;
- creation of a new open space on the existing car park land; and
- identification of the interface with Rippon Lea Estate as a sensitive interface.

FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A more detailed implementation plan will be developed following adoption of the *Elsternwick Structure Plan*. The detailed implementation plan will guide future project bids as part of Council's budget processes and priority setting.

Council will need to work with a range of stakeholders, either through advocacy or partnership to deliver the identified projects. This will ensure that the streetscape and public space improvements outlined in the *Elsternwick Structure Plan* are carried out in an orderly and staged manner and in a way that is affordable for the community. Stakeholders and project partners include the local community, local traders, landowners, VicRoads, and Public Transport Victoria.

POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

To ensure that the land use and development outcomes outlined in the *Plan* are delivered and enforceable, the objectives need to be translated into the *Glen Eira Planning Scheme*.

The *Scheme* guides decision-making on planning permit applications and governs issues such as design and development; land use; heritage; neighbourhood character; and amenity.

This statutory translation is achieved by undertaking a Planning Scheme Amendment, which will involve 'statutory' community consultation. The Amendment process will commence following Council's adoption of the *Structure Plan*. As part of this translation process, the specific statutory tools and mechanisms will be developed to best translate the relevant objectives of the *Structure Plan*. Potential statutory implementation measures are listed in the relevant sections of the *Plan*.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The development of the Elsternwick *Structure Plan* has been an iterative process, driven by community feedback and expert review, six rounds of consultation, with more than 1,110 submissions received for Elsternwick.

The comprehensive consultation process undertaken with the Elsternwick community is outlined below:

STAGE	DATES	FEEDBACK RECEIVED	SECTIONS OF THE STRUCTURE PLAN INFLUENCED
1 Tell us what you love about your shopping strip	28 November 2016- 19 February 2017	Surveys: 356 Facebook comments: 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision • Public spaces
2 Transforming our neighbourhoods together	10 March- 9 April 2017	Surveys: 81 Drop-in sessions: 55 Email/mail submissions: 3 Facebook comments: 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision • Public spaces
3 Activity Centre, Housing and Local Economy Strategy and early Structure Plan exploration	24 May- 13 June 2017	Online feedback forms: 38 Email submissions: 26 Forum attendees: 45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision • Land use
4 Quality Design Principles	26 July- 3 September 2017	Online forum: 82 Facebook comment: 5 Submissions: 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings
5	26 July-	Surveys: 93	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use

Draft Concept Plan	3 September 2017	<p>Forum comments: 17</p> <p>Concept plan document downloads: 755</p> <p>Facebook comments: 13</p> <p>Email/mail/phone submissions: 107</p> <p>Community forum attendees: 88</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings • Public spaces • Parking and movement • Urban renewal
6 Draft Structure Plan/ Quality Design Guidelines	30 October- 11 December 2017	<p>Email submissions: 237</p> <p>Surveys: 123</p> <p>Online forum comments: 58</p> <p>Facebook comments: 4</p> <p>Forum attendees: Approx. 200</p> <p>Drop-in sessions: 80</p> <p>Quality Design Guidelines submissions: 46</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use • Buildings • Public spaces • Parking and movement • Urban renewal

The *Elsternwick Draft Structure Plan Consultation Overview* (attachment 2) provides a concise summary of the six stage consultation process that informs the development of the *Elsternwick Structure Plan*.

Detailed reports of the six stages, including the community submissions received, have been made publicly available throughout the process and can be found online at www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/elsternwick

Detailed consultation reports include:

- Stage one: *Tell us what you love about your shopping strip consultation summary*
- Stage two: *Transforming our neighbourhoods together consultation summary*
- Stage three: *Activity centre, housing and local economy strategy and early structure plan exploration consultation summary*
- Stage four: *Quality Design Principles consultation summary*
- Stage five: *Elsternwick draft concept plan consultation summary*
- Stage six: *Elsternwick draft structure plan consultation summary*

If Council adopts the *Elsternwick Structure Plan*, officers will undertake further communication to:

- acknowledge and thank all submitters;
- outline the Council decision and provide a link to the new *Structure Plan*;
- outline how the adopted *Structure Plan* addresses the key concerns raised in consultation; and
- outline the next steps, in particular the future Planning Scheme Amendment timeframes.

LINK TO COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY PLAN

Theme one: *Liveable and well designed*

- Create prosperous, accessible and vibrant urban places.
- Encourage development that benefits the community.
- Proactively plan for and manage change within our urban places.
- Invest sustainably in our infrastructure and community assets.

OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in this matter.

CONCLUSION

Council has the challenging task of accommodating future growth and new development, while protecting Elsternwick's strong heritage and cultural character. The Elsternwick *Structure Plan* provides a shared future vision and robust plan that balances the current and future community needs, while also creating a vibrant and successful centre.