

MINUTES

Meeting of Council

Held at the
Civic Centre
511 Burwood Highway
Wantirna South
On
Tuesday 27 January 2026



The Agenda for the Meeting of Council, Tuesday 27 January 2026, forms part of these Minutes and is attached in full at the end of the Minutes.

These Minutes are considered draft until adopted and confirmed at the next Meeting of Council

The meeting opened at 7.05 pm.

PRESENT:

Cr Paige Kennett (Mayor)	Chandler Ward
Cr Chris Duncan (Deputy Mayor)	Collier Ward
Cr Peter Lockwood	Baird Ward
Cr Robert Williams	Dinsdale Ward
Cr Meagan Baker	Dobson Ward
Cr Parisa Considine	Friberg Ward
Cr Lisa Cooper	Scott Ward
Cr Susan Pearce	Taylor Ward
Cr Glen Atwell	Tirhatuan Ward
Bruce Dobson	Chief Executive Officer
Grant Thorne	Director – Infrastructure
Matt Kelleher	Director - City Liveability
Judy Chalkley	Director – Connected Communities
Liesl Westberry	Interim Director - Customer and Performance
James Morris	Acting Chief Financial Officer
Andrew Dowling	Manager, Governance and Risk
Saskia Weerheim	Head of Governance

THE MEETING OPENED WITH A STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND A STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land, and meets on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people. We pay our respects to elders both past and present.

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1 Apologies And Requests For Leaves Of Absence

Nil.

2 Declarations Of Conflict Of Interest

Councillor Cooper foreshadowed declaring a general conflict of interest in Item 8.1 Community Partnership Fund Program Review.

Councillor Baker foreshadowed making a transparency statement in Item 6.1 Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation 1 December 2025 to 31 December 2025.

Councillor Williams foreshadowed declaring a material conflict of interest in Item 8.1 Community Partnership Fund Program Review.

3 Confirmation Of Minutes

The Chairperson, Councillor Kennett, invited Councillors to raise any opposition to the Minutes of the Meetings of Council held on Monday 8 December 2025 and Monday 15 December 2025. There being none, the Chairperson declared the Minutes be confirmed.

4 Presentations, Petitions And Memorials

MEMORIAL – PHILLIP MANN

Councillor Williams noted the passing of Philip Mann on 10 January 2026. Philip was recognised as the Knox Local Hero in 2011 for his outstanding service to the Knox community through his long association with the State Emergency Service (SES).

Councillor Williams acknowledged Phillip served with the Knox SES from 2005 until his passing, contributing more than 20 years of dedicated volunteer service. He was widely respected for his expertise in road crash rescue operations, his commitment to emergency response availability, and his calm and compassionate conduct in high pressure situations.

Councillor Williams noted that in addition to his operational role, Phillip contributed to community education, volunteer training, and unit development. This included providing specialist training to interstate volunteers during the March 2010 hailstorm response and contributing to the planning and relocation of the Knox SES unit.

Councillor Williams passed on Council's condolences to Phillip's wife, Samantha, his children and family, and the members of the Knox State Emergency Service.

MEMORIAL – BARRY TREADWELL

Councillor Pearce acknowledged the life and community contributions of Barry Treadwell who worked with a range of community organisations over several decades. Barry was an active member of the Trafalgar Apex Club, continuing his involvement through and beyond his retirement. Through

his workplace, Barry developed an interest in international student exchange programs and subsequently served as chairman of both the West Gippsland and East Gippsland chapters. His family hosted three international exchange students from Japan and Thailand, and he supported program administration, including matching students with host families.

Councillor Pearce noted Barry became involved in the establishment of a new Lions Club in Yarragon in 1996, and he remained a member until 2014. Barry received the Melvin Jones Fellowship in June 2007 in recognition of his sustained service.

Councillor Pearce highlighted Barry was a founding member of the Rowville Men's Shed when it commenced in 2010. As a charter member, he served as Treasurer and later President while the Shed operated from temporary accommodation at Stamford Park. Councillor Pearce also noted Barry contributed to the formation and governance of the Orana Neighbourhood House Men's Shed, serving on the management committee from 2017, including four years as President and three years as Vice President.

Councillor Pearce noted Barry volunteered as a repairer at the Knox Repair Café and supported the U3A Woodwork group through the Men's Shed by providing introductions and practical support. Barry was also nominated for the 2009 Australia Day Awards for his service.

Councillor Pearce passed on Council's appreciation for Barry's extensive community involvement and the positive impact of his service across multiple local organisations, and extended Council's condolences to his family and friends.

5 Reports By Councillors

5.1 Councillor Baker

Councillor Baker reported attending the following:

- Australia Day Community Barbeque

5.2 Councillor Cooper

Councillor Cooper reported attending the following:

- Planning Consultative Committee meeting in relation to 6 Margo Street, Ferntree Gully

Councillor Cooper also:

- Noted several emails were received from residents over the period relating to various matters and referred to Customer Service.

5.3 Councillor Duncan

Councillor Duncan reported attending the following:

- Foothills Community Christmas Lunch on Christmas Eve with the Mayor. Councillor Duncan noted Council previously approved a \$15,000 grant to support the event.
- Annual Collier Trophy Awards presentations at several primary school assemblies prior to Christmas.
- Numerous training and development activities in the role of Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Duncan also:

- Recorded the first Christmas message as Deputy Mayor with the Mayor.
- Met with Kevin Knox and purchased a copy of his book.

5.4 Councillor Lockwood

Councillor Lockwood reported attending the following:

- Council Staff STAR Awards.
- Australia Day Citizenship Ceremonies.

5.5 Councillor Considine

Councillor Considine reported attending the following:

- Knox BMX Track event on 18 January - thanked the Knox BMX team and volunteers for delivering a successful day.

- Waterford Park Retirement Village, representing Council alongside MP Kim Wells, Member for Rowville.

Councillor Considine also:

- Wished everyone a Happy New Year, hoping for peace and good health for all.
- Congratulated all new Australian citizens who attended the recent ceremonies.
- Expressed deep sadness regarding the loss of innocent lives in Iran.

5.6 Councillor Atwell

Councillor Atwell reported attending the following:

- Rowville Primary School where he presented the Tirhatuan Award to students with the Principal.
- Australia Day Citizenship Ceremonies - passed on congratulations to the Mayor for successfully presiding over her first official ceremonies.
- Australia Day Barbeque at the Arboretum praising the efforts of the Rotary Club who supported the event.

Councillor Atwell also:

- Acknowledged the community contributions of Phillip Mann and Barry Treadwell.
- Reported recent correspondence from ward residents regarding shedding gum trees, particularly along Taylors Lane and Turramurra Drive, which are currently dropping large amounts of bark.

5.7 Councillor Williams

Councillor Williams reported attending the following:

- Australia Day events across Knox, attending all three Citizenship Ceremonies alongside fellow councillors and the Mayor.
- Rotary Club of Knox Australia Day BBQ, acknowledging their efforts and community contribution.

Councillor Williams also:

- Expressed thanks to emergency services volunteers (CFA, SES) for their significant work during recent fires and an accident on Burwood Highway that resulted in two fatalities.
- Acknowledged the Council team's work over Christmas and New Year, including for park and road maintenance, mowing and general presentation of public spaces.
- Commented on the ongoing fire season, noting difficult months ahead.
- Noted he engaged with the community by posting surveys to residents over the period – receiving some great feedback.
- Highlighted improvements on Scoresby Road where pothole repairs have been completed.
- Noted positive community feedback about the Christmas decorations across Knox and the enhanced sense of local spirit they have generated.

- Recognised the collective achievements over the past 12 months.

5.8 Councillor Pearce

Councillor Pearce reported attending the following:

- Rowville Men's Shed, thanking volunteers for their time, skills and contribution.
- Henry Park Primary School presentation, presenting the George Williams Taylor Award for fundraising efforts toward the school playground - praising the commitment and fundraising achievements of the award recipient.
- Three Australia Day Citizenship Ceremonies at the Civic Centre.
- Australia Day Barbeque at Tim Neville Arboretum, an event attended by around 50 people.

Councillor Pearce also:

- Extended Christmas and New Year greetings and reflected on a wonderful festive season.
- Engaged with residents on issues including footpaths, gum tree waste, summer-related Council services.

5.9 Councillor Kennett

Councillor Kennett reported attending the following:

- Knox Infolink volunteer event, where volunteers packed hampers and wrapped Christmas gifts for families experiencing hardship.
- Knox Infolink hamper collection day - expressing appreciation for the support they provide the local community.
- Orchard Church of Christ in Boronia, who served Christmas dinner to people experiencing homelessness, supported through Council grant funding.
- Phil Mann's funeral, attending on behalf of Council - thanked Cr Williams for his thoughtful memorial.
- Eastern Region Group Meeting.
- Foothills Volunteer Christmas Lunch.
- Radio Eastern 98.1 – Town Talk.
- Meeting with The Basin Temple and Federal Minister for Multiculturalism, Julian Hill.
- Track Attack 2026 at Knox BMX Club.
- The Knox Star Awards.
- The Bayswater Lions Club.
- Three Citizenship Ceremonies at the Civic Centre on Australia Day.
- Rotary's Australia Day BBQ at Tim Neville Arboretum, where I spoke to all residents that lined up to get a sausage.

6 Planning Matters

6.1 Report of Planning Applications Decided Under Delegation 1 December 2025 to 31 December 2025

SUMMARY

Details of planning applications considered under delegation are referred for information. It is recommended that the items be noted.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the planning applications decided under delegation 1 December 2025 to 31 December 2025 as set out in the officers' report.

Councillor Baker made a transparency statement, noting that she knows someone who resides near to one of the properties named in this report. Councillor Baker noted that as the report is for noting only and there is no decision is required, she advised that she does believe she has a conflict of interest.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Williams

That Council note the planning applications decided under delegation 1 December 2025 to 31 December 2025 as set out in the officers' report.

CARRIED

6.2 6 Margot Street, Ferntree Gully

SUMMARY

This report considers Planning Application P/2025/6240 for buildings and works for a Rooming House at 6 Margot Street, Ferntree Gully.

RECOMMENDATION (SUMMARY)

That Council issue a Notice of Decision to Grant a Planning Permit for buildings and works for a Rooming House at 6 Margot Street, Ferntree Gully, subject to conditions detailed in the full recommendation in section 10 below.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council resolve to defer consideration of this item to the Council Meeting on 9 February 2026.

CARRIED

7 Public Question Time

Question Time commenced at 7:41 pm.

The following question was raised with Council:

7.1 Question One - Mirren Mackenzie

Magic Garden has been around for 18 years, employs 12 people and is a huge part of so many local families. We would like to ask about the thought process behind some of the planning decisions in regards to Childcare Centres being built in the municipality. Other than revenue raising for council through higher rates being charged for businesses - why are council approving so many more childcare centres in our area without any for thought of the effect on current local small business such as privately owned and operated centres who are already struggling against the bigger multi nationals.

Magic Garden is a small (39 place) centre in Ferntree Gully that is operating at 60% occupancy and struggling to gain new children due to many factors and the biggest one is that there are now approx. 20 centres within 5kms of us - not including council run centres.

The Director City Liveability, Matt Kelleher responded:

- Noted that Planning Application P/2025/6412 for the development and use of a Childcare Centre at 2 Loretto Avenue, Ferntree Gully is relevant to this question. This application is currently being processed and at this time has not been determined by Council.
- Noted that child care centres are generally provided by the private sector in Knox. It has been long established in Victoria that it is not the intent of the Planning & Environment Act nor of Planning Schemes to stifle competition. Decisions are not meant to operate in such a way to prevent a business commencing in an area, even if there was a lack of demonstrated commercial need, or if the effect was to make a similar business unviable. In this case Council will need to consider the proposal on planning grounds such as compliance with policy, impacts on the character of the area, provision of car parking, any negative amenity impacts and the like. It is not within Council's discretion to refuse proposal such as this, or any proposal on the basis that there are similar business nearby.
- Noted that when the application is determined by Council, the applicant or objectors (if any) may lodge an appeal at VCAT if they are unhappy with the Council decision.

Question Time Concluded at 7:47 pm.

8 Officer Reports

8.1 Community Partnership Fund Program Review

SUMMARY

Council delivers several grant programs, including the Minor Grant Program, Emergency Relief Fund, Community Development Fund (CDF), and the Community Partnership Fund (CPF). These programs are administered by the Community Strengthening Department in accordance with Council's Grant Framework Policy and supported by program-specific procedures and guidelines.

The CPF is the most substantial of Council's grant programs. The current four-year funding cycle ends in June 2026, and a review is undertaken in the final year to ensure the Program remains relevant and aligned with community need. The review also aims to ensure:

- Funding streams align with the Council and Health and Wellbeing Plan 2025–29;
- Grant programs are accessible and equitable;
- Best practice principles are utilised throughout Council's grant programs;
- Internal processes and guidelines are consistent; and
- Grant programs are flexible in responding to community needs and emerging issues.

The 2024-25 review confirmed that the CPF continues to provide vital support to local organisations. It also identified opportunities to strengthen consistency, transparency, equity, and responsiveness. As a result, five key recommendations are proposed for the next CPF cycle and these changes strengthen governance, improve equity and transparency, simplify administration, and ensure the CPF remains responsive to community need as it enters the next funding cycle.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to:

1. Transition the Community Partnership Fund (CPF) to a three-year funding cycle to balance responsiveness with funding certainty;
2. Embed the CPF assessment process within the Community Development Fund (CDF) assessment process and update the CDF Assessment Panel Terms of Reference to reflect this. This will include the CPF being assessed by the newly titled Community Grants Assessment Panel;
3. Re-align CPF timelines with the CDF by commencing funding in January rather than July;
4. Make all CPF funding streams contested and introduce Service Agreements for selected essential service organisations that deliver direct service to Knox residents, where no alternative provider exists as detailed in Section 1.4.4 of the officers' report; and
5. Streamline the CPF funding streams from six to three: Specialist Community Support Services, Community Development and Volunteer Resourcing and Support.

Pursuant to Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) and Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council, Councillor Cooper declared a general conflict of interest in this item on the grounds that she is the Network Manager for 31 community houses in the Outer Eastern Suburbs including: Coonara Community House, The Basin Community House, Orana Community House, Rowville Living and Learning Centre and Mountain District Learning Centre.

Councillor Cooper left the meeting at 7.48 pm before the discussion and vote.

Pursuant to Section 130 of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act) and Chapter 5 of the Governance Rules of Knox City Council, Councillor Williams declared a material conflict of interest in this item on the grounds that he is the current Group Officer for the Knox CFA.

Councillor Williams left the meeting at 7.48 pm before the discussion and vote.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Pearce

SECONDED: Councillor Lockwood

That Council resolve to:

1. Retain the four-year funding cycle for the Community Partnership Fund (CPF).
2. Make all CPF grant funding streams contested and streamline the CPF funding streams from six to three:
 - a. Specialist Community Support Services;
 - b. Community Development; and
 - c. Volunteer Resourcing and Support.
3. Re-align CPF timelines with the CDF by commencing funding in January rather than July.
4. Note the proposal to rename the “CDF Assessment Panel” the “Community Grants Assessment Panel” and that revised draft terms of references, incorporating the changes outlined in resolution 1 to 3 above, will be presented to a Council Meeting in April 2026 (unless deferred in consultation with the Mayor).
5. Note a revised Community Grant Framework and Guidelines will be presented to a Council Meeting in April 2026 (unless deferred in consultation with the Mayor) incorporating the changes outlined in resolution 1 to 3 above.
6. Introduce four-year service agreements for the following essential service organisations and provide direct funding for these organisations outside CPF grant program:
 - Knox Infolink
 - Neighbourhood Houses (Knox Learning Alliance):
 - Coonara Community House;
 - Orana Neighbourhood House;
 - Rowville Community Learning Centre;
 - Mountain District Learning Centre;
 - The Basin Community House.
 - Knox Toy Library
 - Knox Historical Society
 - Knox specific CFA Brigades
 - Knox SES Branches
7. Note for the purposes of the service agreements with the Essential Service organisations set out in resolution 6 above, that: Requests for funding from additional essential service organisations would considered on a case-by-case basis as part of the annual budget cycle and/or a separate report to Council.
 - a A report regarding the draft service agreements for the essential service organisations will be presented to Council in April 2026 (unless deferred in consultation with the Mayor)

including:

- b A template for the Draft Service agreements, including:**
 - Provisions that specify that where Council funds are provided for the purchase of goods, the goods purchased must be retained for the benefit of the Knox community, but may be made available for loan outside Knox in emergency situations;
 - Details of the acquittal process to be followed to ensure funds are being used for their attended purpose.
- 8 The result of consultation with each of the essential service organisations regarding the outcomes of the last Community Partnership Funding Program.**
- 9 Note the previous CPF grant funding of \$831,255 is proposed to be allocated for 2026-2027 as follows:**
 - Contested CPF grant funding of \$444,887
 - Funding for essential service organisations of \$386,368.

CARRIED

Councillor Williams and Councillor Cooper returned to the Chamber at 8.01 pm following the vote on Item 8.1.

Councillor Lockwood left the chamber at 8.01 pm before the Procedural Motion to adjourn the meeting.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That Council adjourn the Meeting for 5 Minutes.

CARRIED

The Meeting was adjourned at 8.01 pm and resumed at 8.19 pm with all Councillors present.

8.2 Review of the Planning Consultative Committee Terms of Reference

SUMMARY

This report relates to the Terms of Reference for the Planning Consultative Committee (PCC). The Terms of Reference were considered at the Council Meeting on 27 October 2025 where Council resolved to continue holding Planning Consultation Committee Meetings, and that a further report be considered by Council to review the Terms of Reference. Overall, the Planning Consultation Meetings are considered to be operating satisfactorily, and it is recommended that Council make some minor amendments and updates to the Terms of Reference.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopt the Terms of Reference for the Planning Consultative Committee (PCC), as provided in Attachment 3 of this report.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Cooper

That Council adopt the Terms of Reference for the Planning Consultative Committee (PCC), as provided in Attachment 3 of this report.

CARRIED

8.3 The Basin Parking Management Plan

SUMMARY

In alignment with the Knox Parking Policy, The Basin Parking Management Plan provides a comprehensive strategy to address increasing parking pressures within The Basin Triangle, driven by its mix of recreational, commercial, and community activities. This report outlines the background of parking challenges and summarises findings from two phases of community consultation, which included 49 responses in Phase One and 93 responses raised in Phase Two.

The Plan (Attachment 1) includes an implementation strategy divided into two stages: commercial and residential. The first stage focuses on signage and restriction changes to improve safety and support local businesses. The second stage identifies proposed parking responses within the adjacent residential areas, that could reasonably be implemented, subject to demand. Such future changes would each require community engagement on the discrete proposals presented. This report also provides an update on works completed to date and seeks Council's adoption of The Basin Parking Management Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Adopt The Basin Parking Management Plan as presented in Attachment 1.
2. Notes that The Basin Parking Management Plan has been informed by community engagement processes.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Kennett

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That Council:

1. **Adopt The Basin Parking Management Plan as presented in Attachment 1, subject to the following the following amendment:**
 - a. **That on Page 3 of Appendix 1 to this report - The Basin Parking Management Plan - and in the proposed timeline July 2026 - June 2027 section, a new bullet point be added, which states "implement additional bicycle parking within the precinct incorporating community engagement processes."**
2. **Note that The Basin Parking Management Plan has been informed by community engagement processes**
3. **On adoption of this report, write to the Department of Transport and Planning to advocate for the consideration of infrastructure treatments along Mountain Hwy in proximity to The Basin shopping centre which would support vehicle turnaround opportunities.**

CARRIED

8.4 Revised Instrument of Delegation - Planning to Members of Council Staff

SUMMARY

Instruments of Delegation represent the formal delegation of powers by Council and enable the effective functioning of Council.

One Instrument of Delegation has been revised, being the Instrument of Delegation – Planning.

RECOMMENDATION

In the exercise of the powers conferred by the legislation referred to in the attached Instrument of Delegation – Planning (Attachment 1), Council resolves to:

1. Delegate its powers, duties, and functions outlined in the Instrument of Delegation - Planning (Attachment 1) to the Council staff who hold, act in, or perform the duties of the specified positions, subject to the acceptance of tracked changes and the conditions stated in each Instrument.
2. Note that the Instrument of Delegation - Planning (Attachment 1) will take effect once the tracked changes are accepted and the documents are signed by the Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor.
3. Revoke the previous version of the Instrument of Delegation - Planning effective upon the new Instrument coming into force.
4. Note the duties and functions set out in the Instruments must be performed, and the powers set out in the Instrument must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Baker

SECONDED: Councillor Atwell

In the exercise of the powers conferred by the legislation referred to in the attached Instrument of Delegation – Planning (Attachment 1), Council resolves to:

1. Delegate its powers, duties, and functions outlined in the Instrument of Delegation - Planning (Attachment 1) to the Council staff who hold, act in, or perform the duties of the specified positions, subject to the acceptance of tracked changes and the conditions stated in each Instrument.
2. Note that the Instrument of Delegation - Planning (Attachment 1) will take effect once the tracked changes are accepted and the documents are signed by the Chief Executive Officer and the Mayor.
3. Revoke the previous version of the Instrument of Delegation - Planning effective upon the new Instrument coming into force.
4. Note the duties and functions set out in the Instruments must be performed, and the powers set out in the Instrument must be executed, in accordance with any guidelines or policies of Council that it may from time to time adopt.

CARRIED

9 Supplementary Items

Nil.

10 Notices Of Motion

10.1 Notice of Motion No. 192 – Rooming Houses

The following notice of motion was lodged by Councillor Cooper in accordance with Council's Governance Rules:

I hereby give notice that it is my intention to move the following motion at the Council Meeting on 27 January 2026:

That Council, having heard from local residents in Ferntree Gully in December regarding their concerns about a Rooming House planning application and the management of existing Rooming Houses:

1. Notes that Rooming Houses play an important role in Victoria's housing system, often accommodating vulnerable residents; being provided by both government, not for profit and private operators; and primarily regulated under a complex state regulatory framework involving multiple agencies.
2. Acknowledges the increasing pressure on local governments to manage the impacts of Rooming Houses through registration, inspections, compliance and community response.
3. Advocates to the Victorian State Government for:
 - a. Strengthened minimum standards and resident protections, including:
 - i. Improved safety, amenity, and liveability standards;
 - ii. Stronger enforcement mechanisms and penalties for non-compliance by operators;
 - iii. Enhanced protections for residents relating to privacy, security of tenure, rent setting and eviction processes; and
 - iv. More proactive and regular compliance inspections, rather than reliance on complaints-based enforcement.
 - b. Review of registration triggers to more appropriately address community concerns and welfare of local residents;
 - c. Improved local government input into existing planning controls, including reforms to clause 52.23 of the Victorian Planning Provisions to require planning permits for all Rooming Houses; not just those above a defined scale or impact threshold, along with stronger community consultation (notice) and appeal rights in relation to new or expanded Rooming House developments.
 - d. Funding and/or increased funding and support for Rooming House regulation, including:
 - i. State funded regional managers, employed by the State Government, to monitor privately owned rooming houses, and non-compliant rooming houses, across the state at no cost to tenants, to ensure improved management and tenant welfare;
 - ii. Training and workforce support for local government compliance officers;

- iii. State–local coordination to address unregistered and/or unsafe rooming houses;
 - iv. Funding for wrap-around support services for rooming house residents, and
 - v. Work with well managed rooming houses to promote broader affordable housing and homelessness strategies.
- 4. Writes to the Minister for Housing, the Minister for Planning, the Minister for Consumer Affairs, and the Knox local State Members of Parliament outlining Council’s advocacy position for Rooming Houses.
 - 5. Receives a follow-up report to be presented to Council within six (6) months updating council on the actions taken by the local State Members and relevant Ministers in response to Council’s advocacy; and any policy, funding or legislative developments relevant to Rooming Houses arising from this advocacy.

RESOLUTION

MOVED: Councillor Cooper

SECONDED: Councillor Baker

That Council, having heard from local residents in Ferntree Gully in December regarding their concerns about a Rooming House planning application and the management of existing Rooming Houses:

- 1. **Notes that Rooming Houses play an important role in Victoria’s housing system, often accommodating vulnerable residents; being provided by both government, not for profit and private operators; and primarily regulated under a complex state regulatory framework involving multiple agencies.**
- 2. **Acknowledges the increasing pressure on local governments to manage the impacts of Rooming Houses through registration, inspections, compliance and community response.**
- 3. **Advocates to the Victorian State Government for:**
 - a. **Strengthened minimum standards and resident protections, including:**
 - i. **Improved safety, amenity, and liveability standards;**
 - ii. **Stronger enforcement mechanisms and penalties for non-compliance by operators;**
 - iii. **Enhanced protections for residents relating to privacy, security of tenure, rent setting and eviction processes; and**
 - iv. **More proactive and regular compliance inspections, rather than reliance on complaints-based enforcement.**
 - b. **Review of registration triggers to more appropriately address community concerns and welfare of local residents;**
 - c. **Improved local government input into existing planning controls, including reforms to clause 52.23 of the Victorian Planning Provisions to require planning permits for all Rooming Houses; not just those above a defined scale or impact threshold, along with stronger community consultation (notice) and appeal rights in relation to new or expanded Rooming House developments.**
 - d. **Funding and/or increased funding and support for Rooming House regulation, including:**
 - i. **State funded regional managers, employed by the State Government, to monitor privately owned rooming houses, and non-compliant rooming houses, across the state at no cost to tenants, to ensure improved management and tenant welfare;**
 - ii. **Training and workforce support for local government compliance officers;**

- iii State–local coordination to address unregistered and/or unsafe rooming houses;
 - iv Funding for wrap-around support services for rooming house residents, and
 - v Work with well managed rooming houses to promote broader affordable housing and homelessness strategies.
4. Writes to the Minister for Housing, the Minister for Planning, the Minister for Consumer Affairs, and the Knox local State Members of Parliament outlining Council’s advocacy position for Rooming Houses.
 5. Receives a follow-up report to be presented to Council within six (6) months updating council on the actions taken by the local State Members and relevant Ministers in response to Council’s advocacy; and any policy, funding or legislative developments relevant to Rooming Houses arising from this advocacy.

CARRIED

11 Urgent Business

Nil.

12 Questions Through the Chair

Mayor Kennett asked the following question:

In relation to the Emergency Services Volunteers Fund, which is paid by ratepayers and collected by Council on behalf of the State Government:

- **Where these funds are being directed?**
- **How they are being allocated and distributed, particularly in relation to emergency services organisations operating within our municipality, who are working hard at this time of the year?**

Councillor Kennett asked if the CEO would consider drafting and sending a letter to the State Government seeking this information and outlining the request for transparency and confirmation of how these funds will support emergency services locally.

The Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Dobson, responded:

- Noting that further enquiries will be undertaken.
- Council has established contacts within the relevant State Government Department responsible for administering the Emergency Services Volunteers Fund.
- As a first step, I propose that we commence enquiries with the Department.
- An update will then be provided to Councillors once further information is available.

13 Confidential Items

Nil.

MEETING CLOSED AT 8:45 pm

Minutes of Meeting confirmed at the
Meeting of Council
held on Monday, 23 February 2026

.....
Chairperson

The Agenda for this meeting is attached in full at the end of the Minutes