PUBLIC QUESTION TIME REGISTER

The following questions were submitted for the Council Meeting held on 23 February 2026.

Under Section 55.6 of Council's Governance Rules, no person may submit more than one question to any Council Meeting.

Due to these constraints, the following full submissions were not addressed during the Council

Meeting and are instead published here with Council's responses.

Remaining Questions as part of submission 7.1 – Vanessa Hall

Question 1 (2 Questions)
Given the proposed 24-26 Taylors Lane 24 two-storey dwelling development adjoining our one-acre, septic-serviced property, we are concerned about the potential impact of this scale of urban intensification on the ongoing functionality of existing onsite wastewater systems in the surrounding area.
With reticulated sewer infrastructure located approximately 200–250 metres from our boundary, and noting that the proposed development will connect to this system, could Council please clarify whether consideration has been given to how increased density may alter local site conditions such as groundwater behaviour and stormwater movement, and in turn affect the land capability of neighbouring properties currently reliant on septic systems?
Further, does Council have a position on whether developments of this scale may trigger the need to assess future transition from onsite wastewater to reticulated sewer servicing in adjoining low-density areas where continued septic reliance may become unsuitable due to surrounding intensification?

Answer 1 – Matt Kelleher, Director City Liveability
Thank you for your question, Vanessa regarding the proposed development at 24–26 Taylors Lane and its potential implications for surrounding properties that rely on onsite wastewater management systems.
As you are no doubt aware the planning application for this proposal was considered earlier in tonight's Council Meeting.
The assessment of the Planning Application for this development is limited to matters listed in Clause 55 of the Knox Planning Scheme. I note that the rules for assessing new housing applications were significantly changed in 2025 by the State Government to limit the number of matters that can be considered by Council, as well as limiting the ability of objectors to seek review of decisions at VCAT. In this case the assessment (as shown in the officer report) does not include assessment of ground water impacts as sites move from septic systems to reticulated sewerage systems.
As the proposed dwellings will connect to reticulated sewer infrastructure, wastewater from the development will not be treated onsite and therefore will not directly increase septic effluent loading within the local soil profile.
If approved, any issued Planning Permit will require stormwater plans and civil engineering documentation to ensure post development conditions from stormwater do not cause unreasonable detriment to surrounding dwellings or the local stormwater drainage system.
Council also acknowledges the added complexity of onsite wastewater systems within an urban environment. Council is responsible for maintaining a Municipal Domestic Wastewater Management Plan. This plan is currently undergoing a review in collaboration with the local water authority, who have specialised knowledge regarding onsite wastewater management. Once completed, the plan will identify current risks associated with onsite wastewater systems within

Knox and the most appropriate actions Council, owners and other authorities and stakeholders can take to mitigate these risks. Additionally, the plan will allow Council to work closely with the local water authority, South East Water, to advocate for an increase in available sewer connections in appropriately identified areas.

Question 2 (3 Questions)
In situations where higher-density development is introduced into areas historically serviced by onsite wastewater systems, could Council clarify how it ensures that new intensification does not create environmental or public health burdens for neighbouring properties?
Specifically, where reticulated sewer infrastructure exists within serviceable proximity and is being accessed by a new development, does Council consider whether reliance on septic systems for adjoining properties remains appropriate in the longer term?
Further, is there a framework or policy position within Council's planning or environmental health processes that addresses whether developers should contribute to broader servicing solutions where their projects effectively accelerate the transition from low-density septic-based areas toward urban density requiring reticulated sewer infrastructure?

Answer 2 – Matt Kelleher, Director City Liveability
It is a requirement that developments that have an urban density (generally a density greater than 1 dwelling per 4,000 sqm, depending on the zoning) be connected to reticulated sewer, where available. Over time, many areas of Melbourne have transitioned to be connected to the reticulated sewer system as the city has grown and become more urbanised.
Regarding the long term suitability of onsite wastewater management systems within the municipality, the review of Councils Municipal Domestic Wastewater Management Plan will include an advocacy approach to work with the local water authority, South East Water to have the approximately 140 remaining properties within Knox that rely on onsite wastewater treatment connected to reticulated sewer services over time.
Costs for connection to the reticulated sewer system are generally a matter between property owners and South East Water. There have been occasions where water authorities work with the state government on sewerage schemes for larger areas to reduce costs.