

13 February 2026

The Hon. Nick Staikos
Minister for Local Government
2 Treasury Place
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002
By email: nick.staikos@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Minister Staikos

Request for Erosion Management Planning Support

Recommendations arising from the Board of Inquiry into the McCrae Landslide

At its meeting of 24 November 2025, Knox City Council (Council) resolved to write to the State Government to seek clarification on policy guidance, technical support, and financial funding to assist the local government sector with erosion management planning. This resolution follows recommendations made relating to the Victorian planning system set out in the report from the Board of Inquiry into the McCrae Landslide. The resolution also follows erosion management planning work underway in nearby councils. As the issue of erosion management and landslide is multifaceted, I have also written to your colleagues, the Ministers for Planning and for Emergency Services and Natural Disaster Recovery.

Board of Inquiry into the McCrae Landslide

The report of the Board of Inquiry into the McCrae Landslide has recently been released and is instructive in the technical analysis of the drivers for landslide events, in addition to providing commentary and recommendations regarding the obligations for government, service authorities and municipal authorities to protect communities. While the report provides recommendations relevant to Mornington Peninsula Shire based on the findings of the McCrae incident, wider recommendations present findings relevant state-wide.

In particular, it is noted that there are recommendations that include substantive actions for the State Government to lead and instruct through appropriate guidance and planning reforms. This includes preparing updated state-wide data on landslide risk and broadening its monitoring programs to include landslide events. Given the breadth and nature of the risk involved, it is considered appropriate for the State Government to lead on risk and planning reform in this area. The provision of grant funding support to impacted councils that face imminent risk is appropriate to undertake timely technical studies; along with providing assistance in implementing interim planning controls as a first and much needed step in addressing inherent risk.

Erosion Management Overlay work underway in Yarra Ranges and Mornington Peninsula

Our neighbour Yarra Ranges Council recently exhibited Amendment C225yan which seeks to update mapping for the existing Erosion Management Overlay Schedule 1 (EMO1) within the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme to address landslip susceptibility and introduce a new Erosion Management Overlay Schedule 2 (EMO2) addressing debris flow risk.

The amendment relies on advanced geotechnical analysis undertaken in response to the significant storm period of 2019 – 2022. These significant storm events resulted in adverse environmental impacts throughout the Yarra Ranges, which included instances of land slip. These events, both in frequency and magnitude, are expected to increase based on the anticipated impacts of climate change.

Knox City Council lodged a submission to the amendment following a review of the documentation which found:

- The analysis depicted an area in the vicinity of Bowen Avenue in The Basin in an abutting vegetated reserve that demonstrates characteristics of a debris flow path event. This area is within Knox in the Dandenong Foothills.
- An area of rural character in Sassafras was highlighted as a potential source location for a debris flow event. The full extent of the flow path from land in Yarra Ranges into Knox was not identified as it was outside the Yarra Ranges study area.
- Landslip susceptibility mapping indicated areas of high, medium, low and no susceptibility near the western boundary of Yarra Ranges abutting Knox, particularly in steep terrain in Ferntree Gully and Upper Ferntree Gully.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council has undertaken similar technical risk mapping work and is progressing recommendations to implement erosion management controls in the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme.

Obligations on local government

The work underway by Yarra Ranges and Mornington Peninsula Shire Councils recognises the obligations on local government in fulfilling their statutory obligations and planning scheme requirements to identify potential natural hazards that have capacity to impact human life, property and the community more broadly. These obligations are set out in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Planning for long term environmental resilience and adaptation to climate change are key considerations for any local government authority in the contemporary landscape and remain key priorities for environmental hazard mitigation and management service planning.

Work to be advanced by Knox City Council

Following the recommendations arising from the Board of Inquiry into the McCrae Landslide and the findings of the work underway in the adjoining Yarra Ranges Council, Knox City Council is in the process of commissioning a preliminary erosion risk assessment across Knox. A clear focus area will be the Dandenong Foothills given their proximity to the adjoining Dandenong Ranges National Park, however the assessment is expected to be municipal wide.

Council may seek to undertake a detailed assessment pending the outcomes of the preliminary assessment. This could lead to amendments to the Knox Planning Scheme to implement any recommendations relating to the application of the Erosion Management Overlay to address landslip and landslide risks.

What is being sought from the State Government

The Board of Inquiry has made recommendations which present a significant issue for Victorian councils from a risk and resourcing perspective. This includes recommendations for planning reforms relating to erosion management and taking a lead role in determining and managing risk.

The Board of Inquiry also made recommendations for a standardised approach to methodology in carrying out risk assessments, and providing the local government sector with technical support, guidance, and financial assistance to undertake erosion management risk assessments.

Knox City Council is seeking for the State Government to provide a response to the recommendations from the Board of Inquiry in a timely manner. This is particularly important given Council will shortly be commencing erosion management risk assessment work following on from the planning scheme amendment in Yarra Ranges Council and the recommendations arising from Board of Inquiry into the McCrae Landslide.

As erosion management and landslide risk are a multifaceted challenge, I have written to whom we considered to be the relevant Ministers. If other Ministers or parts of Government should be apprised of Council's request, we would be grateful for my correspondence to be provided to them.

Further, I would be very interested in meeting with you personally, alongside your appropriate counterpart to discuss this important matter further.

Yours sincerely



Cr Paige Kennett
Mayor

Enquiries: Bruce Dobson, Chief Executive Officer
Document ID: D26-28786

cc: The Hon. Vicki Ward, Minister for Emergency Services, Natural Disaster Recovery
The Hon. Sonya Kilkeny, Minister for Planning



The Hon Nick Staikos MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs
Minister for Local Government

Level 1, 2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne, Victoria 3002

Cr Paige Kennett
Mayor
Knox City Council
By email: Eleonore.Smith@knox.vic.gov.au

CMIN260200749

Dear Cr Kennett,

Thank you for your letter of 13 February 2026 regarding support for erosion management planning.

With the circumstances that led to the McCrae Landslide Board of Inquiry and its subsequent findings, I am pleased that Knox City Council is taking proactive steps to understand the landslide risks in the municipality.

Recommendation 20 from the McCrae Landslide Board of Inquiry does reference the option of the provision of technical or financial assistance to local government authorities where necessary. The Victorian Government, in response to the report, has stated that further work is necessary to understand the full requirements of this recommendation and related recommendations 23 and 25.

My department has contacted the Department of Transport and Planning and understand they will address your concerns around the technical aspects of erosion management planning. Unfortunately, the Victorian Government is unable to support your request for financial support at this time.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to me.

Sincerely,

The Hon Nick Staikos MP
Minister for Consumer Affairs
Minister for Local Government

25 / 03 / 2026