

Attachments

Council Meeting

Tuesday 10 June 2025

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- 10.2 Notice of Intention to Declare Special Charges for
Marketing and Promotion and Infrastructure
Purposes: Brentford Square Shopping Centre**
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Plan 2026-2030
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Rateable Properties and Charges
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Proposed Declarations

**10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. Brentford Square Shopping Centre Strategic Business Plan
2026-2030**

BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION



MARCH 2025

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Brentford Square Traders Association

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**10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. Brentford Square Shopping Centre Strategic Business Plan
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY BRENTFORD SQUARE 5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (2031-2026)

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ONE

Overview of Key Issues and Opportunities

Brentford Square Shopping Centre is a well-established retail precinct serving a diverse and growing community within the City of Whitehorse. The centre has a strong mix of essential services, specialty retail, and dining options. However, to remain competitive and relevant in the evolving retail landscape, a proactive approach is required to address key challenges and leverage emerging opportunities.

Key Issues:

- Changing Consumer Behaviour: The rapid growth of online shopping and shifting consumer preferences require a stronger digital presence and e-commerce integration for retailers.
- Evolving Demographics: The population of Whitehorse is projected to grow by over 41,000 residents by 2036, with an increasing multicultural community and aging population that will impact retail needs.
- Retail Competition: Larger shopping centres and commercial precincts nearby (e.g., Forest Hill Chase, Burwood One, Box Hill) continue to attract shoppers, necessitating a unique point of difference for Brentford Square.
- Streetscape and Infrastructure Needs: Upgrades to public spaces, signage, lighting, pedestrian areas, and parking are essential to maintain a safe, welcoming, and accessible environment.
- Business Mix and Vacancy Activation: A need to attract complementary businesses, support existing traders, and activate vacant stores with pop-ups and experiential retail.

Key Opportunities:

- Community Engagement and Events: Hosting family-friendly, cultural, and seasonal events to drive foot traffic and enhance local engagement.
- Digital Marketing and Online Presence: Expanding social media reach, improving the precinct's website, and supporting businesses in developing e-commerce capabilities.
- Retailer Collaboration and Business Development: Strengthening partnerships between traders, landlords, and the local council to foster business growth and sustainability.
- Sustainability Initiatives: Enhancing green spaces, implementing waste reduction programs, and promoting eco-friendly business practices.
- Multicultural and Senior-Focused Retail Strategies: Catering to Whitehorse's growing Chinese, Indian, and senior populations through targeted marketing, product offerings, and inclusive events.

2026
2030BRENTFORD
SQUARE
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BRENTFORD SQUARE SHOPPING CENTRE CURRENT OVERVIEW

Brentford Square Shopping Centre is a well-established **neighbourhood retail precinct** located in **Forest Hill, within the City of Whitehorse**. Serving as a local hub for shopping, dining, and essential services, the centre is highly regarded for its **convenient layout, diverse retail mix, and strong community atmosphere**.

Key Characteristics of Brentford Square

- **Retail Mix & Key Offerings**

Brentford Square features a blend of **essential services, specialty retail, and dining options**, catering primarily to local residents and visitors from surrounding suburbs. The centre includes:

- o **Supermarkets & Grocery Stores** – Anchored by **Woolworths**, alongside specialty food retailers such as bakeries, butchers, speciality market and greengrocers.
- o **Health & Wellness** – Multiple **pharmacies, dental clinics, optometrist, and allied health services** provide convenience for families and seniors.
- o **Cafés & Dining** – A selection of **casual eateries, takeaway options, and dine-in restaurants**, offering diverse cuisines.
- o **Beauty & Personal Care** – Hair salons, nail bars, barber and beauty clinics cater to self-care and grooming needs.
- o **General & Specialty Retail** – Homewares, gift shops, newsagency, and specialty goods stores add variety to the shopping experience.
- o **Professional & Financial Services** – Accountant, Australia Post and other service providers support local business, such as the local MP office, and resident needs.

- **Community Hub & Local Appeal**

Brentford Square is known for its **village-like atmosphere**, attracting **families, seniors, and multicultural shoppers**. Unlike larger shopping centres, it maintains a **friendly, customer-focused shopping experience**, where **local traders and repeat customers create a strong sense of community**.

- **Accessibility & Parking**

- o Easily accessible **via major roads such as Canterbury Road and Springvale Road**.
- o **Ample free parking**, making it convenient for shoppers who prefer to drive.
- o **Public transport access**, with nearby bus routes connecting the centre to surrounding suburbs.

- **Challenges & Areas for Growth**

While Brentford Square remains a **popular local shopping destination**, there are **key challenges that require attention**:

- o **Growing competition** from larger shopping centres like Forest Hill Chase, Burwood One, and Box Hill Central.
- o **Retail vacancies and changing consumer trends**, requiring new strategies to attract diverse businesses.
- o **Streetscape and infrastructure improvements**, including better signage, lighting, seating, and pedestrian access. Ageing shop facades and general maintenance.
- o **Digital transformation**, with many retailers needing stronger online and social media engagement to compete with e-commerce.

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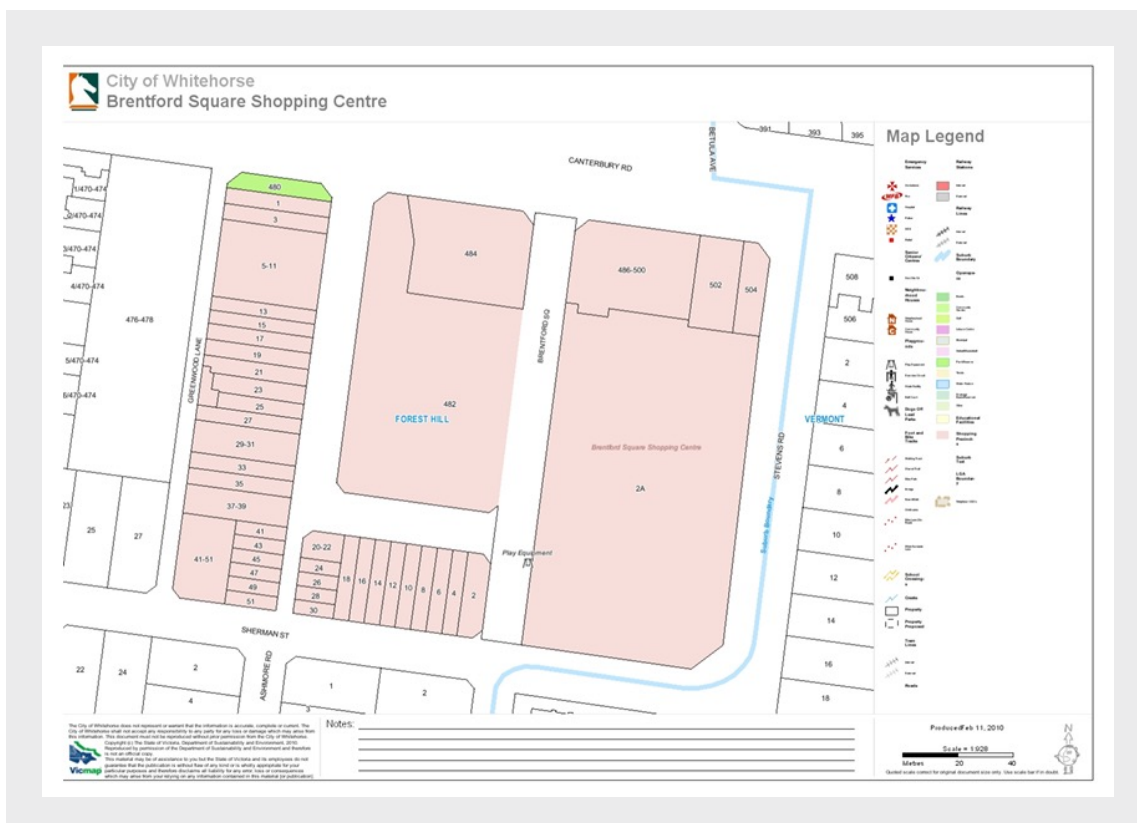
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Brentford Square Shopping Centre is a **trusted and well-loved local shopping precinct** with a strong **community presence, essential services, and a diverse retail mix**. However, to remain **competitive and relevant for the next generation of shoppers**, the centre must **embrace modernization, improve streetscape elements, and implement innovative marketing and business development strategies**. This will ensure that Brentford Square continues to thrive as a **vibrant, community-focused shopping destination in Whitehorse**.



*village-like atmosphere
to the next level.*



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PURPOSE OF THE BUSINESS PLAN



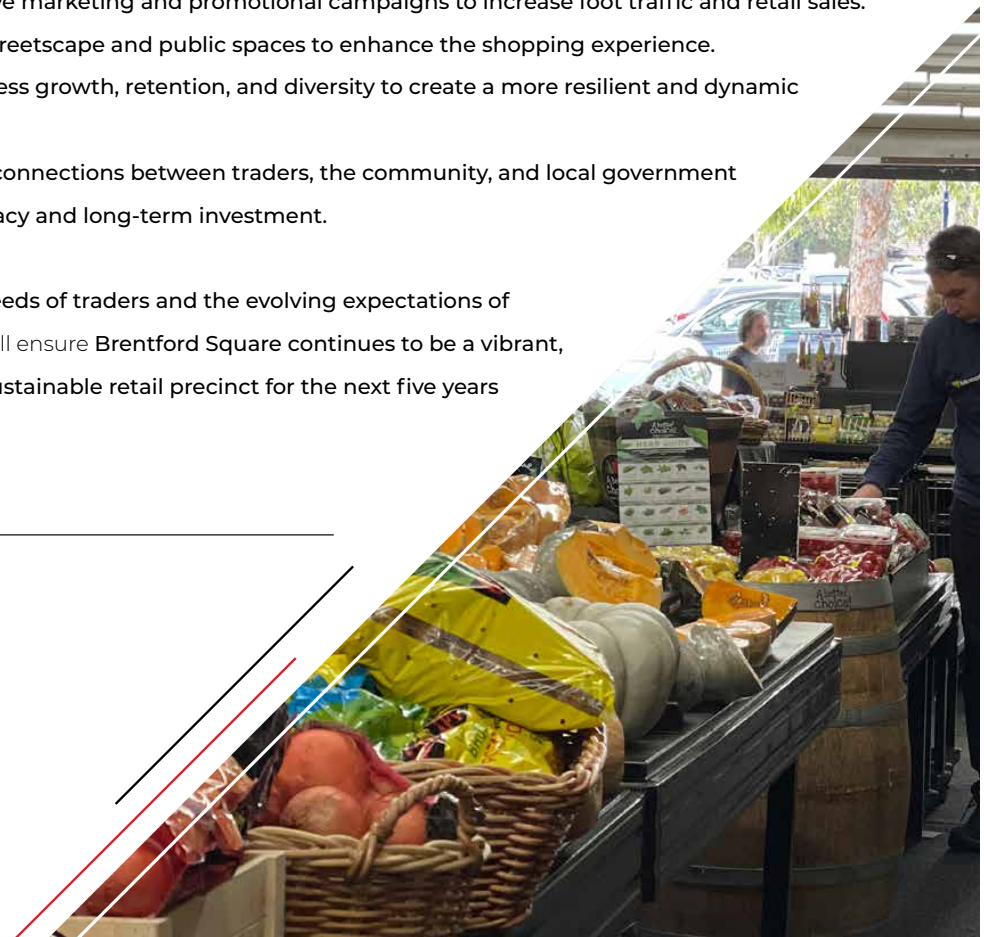
The **Brentford Square 5-Year Business Plan (2026-2031)** has been developed to provide a **strategic framework** for the continued growth, development, and promotion of **Brentford Square Shopping Centre**. This plan outlines **key priorities**, actions, and initiatives to enhance the **vibrancy, economic sustainability, and community engagement** of the centre over the next five years.

A key driver for the development of this plan is the **renewal of the Special Charge (Rate) Scheme for 2026-2031**. This scheme provides **critical funding** for business development, marketing, events, streetscape improvements, and advocacy efforts that directly benefit traders, property owners, and the wider community. Ensuring the successful renewal of this scheme will enable **Brentford Square to remain competitive, attract new businesses, and enhance the overall shopping experience** for customers.

This plan serves as a guiding document for the Brentford Square Traders Association, traders, property owners, and stakeholders, setting a clear vision and direction for the future. It will help to:

- **Strengthen Brentford Square's position as a thriving local shopping precinct.**
- **Deliver effective marketing and promotional campaigns to increase foot traffic and retail sales.**
- **Improve the streetscape and public spaces to enhance the shopping experience.**
- **Support business growth, retention, and diversity to create a more resilient and dynamic centre.**
- **Foster strong connections between traders, the community, and local government to drive advocacy and long-term investment.**

By aligning with the **needs of traders and the evolving expectations of customers**, this plan will ensure **Brentford Square continues to be a vibrant, well-supported, and sustainable retail precinct for the next five years and beyond.**



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WHO IS THIS BUSINESS PLAN FOR?

This Brentford Square 5-Year Business Plan (2026-2031) is designed for a range of stakeholders who contribute to the success, sustainability, and growth of Brentford Square Shopping Centre. It serves as a guiding document for:

1. Brentford Square Traders Association (BSTA)

- Provides a strategic framework to guide marketing, business support, advocacy, and events.
- Helps the association allocate resources effectively, ensuring maximum benefit for members.
- Supports the renewal and implementation of the Special Charge (Rate) Scheme (2026-2031).

2. Business Owners & Traders

- Outlines initiatives to increase foot traffic, customer engagement, and retail sales.
- Provides opportunities for traders to participate in events, promotions, and digital marketing campaigns.
- Supports business networking, collaboration, and professional development.

3. Property Owners & Landlords

- Enhances the value and desirability of Brentford Square as a retail and commercial precinct.
- Encourages occupancy of vacant spaces by attracting diverse and complementary businesses.
- Provides a clear vision for the long-term success of the precinct, helping secure investment.

4. Whitehorse City Council & Government Stakeholders

- Aligns with local economic development and planning strategies to support small business growth.
- Provides a roadmap for public realm improvements, streetscape enhancements, and infrastructure investment.
- Demonstrates community engagement and business collaboration, supporting grant and funding applications.

5. The Local Community & Customers

- Ensures Brentford Square remains a vibrant, accessible, and convenient shopping destination.
- Enhances community engagement through events, activations, and cultural celebrations.
- Supports initiatives to create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive shopping environment.

This plan is a strategic tool for all stakeholders invested in Brentford Square's future success. By aligning the needs of businesses, property owners, local government, and the community, it ensures a coordinated approach to strengthening Brentford Square as a **thriving, resilient, and dynamic retail precinct** for the next five years and beyond.

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ROLE OF THE BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION (BSTA)

The **Brentford Square Traders Association (BSTA)** plays a critical role in supporting, promoting, and advocating for businesses within Brentford Square Shopping Centre. As a representative body for traders and property owners, the BSTA is responsible for ensuring the **long-term vibrancy, economic growth, and community engagement** of the precinct. To achieve these goals, the BSTA employs a part-time centre management team who implement marketing, communications, promotions, events, and administration. This team works closely with traders, stakeholders, and the community to enhance the precinct's visibility, attract customers, and foster a thriving business environment.

1. Management of the Special Charge (Rate) Scheme

- Administers and oversees the Special Charge (Rate) Scheme (2026-2031), ensuring that funds are allocated effectively to benefit traders.
- Ensures transparency and accountability in financial management and reporting.
- Advocates for renewal and continuation of the Special Charge Scheme to secure ongoing investment in marketing, promotions, and streetscape improvements.

2. Marketing & Promotion

- Develops and implements strategic marketing campaigns to increase foot traffic and customer engagement.
- Manages social media, website, and digital marketing initiatives to enhance Brentford Square's online presence.
- Organizes seasonal promotions and loyalty programs, such as a precinct-wide voucher program with Brentford Bucks and purchased gift cards.
- Collaborates with media and local stakeholders to promote Brentford Square as a vibrant shopping destination.

3. Events & Activations

- Organises community-focused events (e.g., Christmas Fair, Easter Celebrations, Scare in the Square) to attract visitors and enhance the shopping experience.
- Supports traders with in-store activations, pop-up experiences, and promotional events.
- Collaborates with the local council and community groups to host cultural and seasonal events aligned with the diverse demographics of Whitehorse.

4. Business Support & Development

- Provides networking and training opportunities to help traders adapt to changing consumer trends, digital marketing, and business strategies.
- Where possible works with landlords and real estate agents to attract new businesses and improve the retail mix.
- Supports small business resilience by providing mentorship, workshops, and collaboration opportunities especially in alliance with Whitehorse City Council.



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5. Advocacy & Streetscape Improvements

- Represents traders in discussions with Whitehorse City Council, local government, and other stakeholders to advocate for business-friendly policies and precinct enhancements.
- Lobbies for streetscape upgrades, including improved lighting, pedestrian-friendly spaces, outdoor seating, and beautification projects.
- Advocates for improved safety measures, parking management, and accessibility enhancements to benefit traders and customers.

The Brentford Square Traders Association Committee as at February 2025 consists of:

President: Penny Tabacco – Eyewear Architects

Vice President: Ratha Kam- Pauls Pies

Treasurer: Martin Marapas – Brentford Square Charcoal Chicken

General: Jeremy LeFort – Lefort Podiatry and Pierre Masto – Pierre's Free Range Meat

Employed on a part-time basis are Centre Managers Sarah Maguire and Anthony Galea from Marmalade Sky Marketing.

The **Brentford Square Traders Association (BSTA)** is the driving force behind the precinct's success, ensuring that traders **receive the support, marketing exposure, and advocacy** needed to thrive. By managing the Special Charge Scheme, organising events, driving marketing initiatives, supporting businesses, and advocating for improvements, the BSTA plays a vital role in securing a strong and prosperous future for **Brentford Square Shopping Centre**.

*long-term vibrancy,
economic growth,
& community engagement*



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KEY HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE PAST FIVE YEARS

1. Events & Community Engagement

Organising engaging events has helped drive foot traffic to Brentford Square, increasing customer engagement and community participation.

- **Easter Activities** – Hosted family-friendly Easter events, including egg hunts and activities for children, which attracted families to the centre.
- **Christmas Activities & Christmas Fair/Market** – Organised festive celebrations, featuring Christmas carols, markets, Santa visits, Santa photos and holiday-themed promotions that created a vibrant atmosphere and encouraged holiday shopping. We have also managed to secure additional grant funding to enable our Christmas festivities.
- **Scare in the Square Halloween Event** – A popular Halloween event with trick-or-treating, decorations, themed entertainment, and activities that brought families together and boosted evening trade.
- **Music and Performances** – Live music and entertainment helped create a lively atmosphere, encouraging longer visits and providing local artists with performance opportunities. Encouraging the community to utilise the Whitehorse Purple Pod has also been a focus for us.
- **School Holiday Activities** – Fun and interactive programs designed to attract families during school breaks, helping to increase foot traffic and business for traders.

2. Marketing & Promotions

Strategic marketing initiatives have kept Brentford Square businesses visible and competitive against larger shopping complexes.

- **Mother's Day & Father's Day Campaigns** – Special promotions, giveaways, and competitions were organised to encourage shoppers to buy gifts locally.
- **Shop Local Campaigns** – Promoted the importance of supporting local businesses through targeted campaigns that emphasized convenience, unique offerings, and community benefits.
- **Funding Vouchers & Brentford Square Bucks** – Implemented a voucher program where customers received discounts or incentives, increasing sales and customer loyalty for traders.
- **Social Media Growth & Engagement** – Regular content creation, promotions, and engagement activities on social media platforms increased brand awareness and customer interaction.
- **Website & Online Directory** – Provided an easily accessible platform where customers could find business information, promotions, and updates about the centre.
- **Inside the Square Newsletter** – A communication tool used to keep traders and customers informed about upcoming events, marketing campaigns, and key developments at Brentford Square.

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Investments in physical improvements have enhanced the shopping experience, ensuring Brentford Square remains an attractive and safe environment for customers.

- #### 4. Advocacy & Centre Management

- **Collaboration with Whitehorse City Council** – Maintained a strong partnership to ensure Brentford Square benefits from Council resources, grants, and strategic planning.
- **Improved Centre Cleaning & Maintenance** – Ensured ongoing upkeep of the centre's public spaces, contributing to a cleaner and more inviting shopping environment.
- **Advocacy for Public Toilets** – Engaged with the Council to push for improved toilet facilities for customers and traders, enhancing visitor convenience.
- **Christmas Decorations & Festive Enhancements** – Installed seasonal decorations to create a festive atmosphere, encouraging shoppers to visit during the holiday season.
- **Gardens & Greenery Upgrades** – Invested in landscaping and greenery to create a pleasant and attractive outdoor shopping environment.



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5. Accountability & Reporting

Ensuring transparency and effective management of the Special Charge Programme has been a priority for the Traders Association.

- **Quarterly Marketing & Financial Reports** – Provided regular updates on marketing performance and financial management to keep traders informed.
- **General Audit & Annual Reports** – Ensured accountability by conducting our annual audit and publishing annual reports detailing expenditure and outcomes.
- **Annual Reviews & Acquittals** – Reviewed and assessed programme success each year, making necessary adjustments to improve initiatives.
- **Street Maintenance Audits** – Conducted inspections to identify and address maintenance issues, ensuring a well-maintained environment.
- **Regular Meetings, Training & Networking Opportunities** – Hosted meetings and training sessions for traders to stay informed, build skills, and network with other business owners.
- **Distribution of Council Materials & Notifications** – Ensured businesses received important updates and communications from the Council, helping them stay informed on relevant policies and changes.

The Brentford Square Traders Association, with the support of **Whitehorse City Council**, has successfully created a thriving, safe, and engaging shopping environment. Through events, marketing, infrastructure improvements, and advocacy, the Special Charge Programme has played a vital role in **driving growth**, **supporting traders**, and **enhancing the overall experience** for customers.



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FUNCTIONS AND KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF BRENTFORD SQUARE SHOPPING CENTRE

Brentford Square Shopping Centre is a well-established, community-focused retail precinct that serves as a vital hub for shopping, dining, and essential services within the **City of Whitehorse**. The centre is known for its strong mix of retailers, accessible layout, and active trader engagement, making it a convenient and welcoming destination for locals and visitors alike.

Key Functions of the Centre:

Retail & Services Hub – Offers a diverse mix of supermarkets, specialty stores, health services, and dining options to meet daily needs.

Community Gathering Place – Hosts popular seasonal events that bring the community together, such as Easter Fun, Scare in the Square (Halloween), and Christmas Fairs. We also host the Whitehorse Purple Pod activation area where we encourage music, buskers and local community groups to access.

Trader & Business Support – The Brentford Square Traders Association (BSTA) provides marketing, advocacy, and business development initiatives to strengthen the centre.

Safe & Secure Environment – A well-managed security camera system ensures a safe shopping experience for visitors and businesses.

Convenient Parking & Accessibility – The centre offers ample parking, including a self-managed trader parking permit system to optimize space for both customers and business owners.

Sustainability Initiatives – A new Visy recycling station has been introduced, reinforcing the centre's commitment to eco-friendly practices.

Major Achievements of Brentford Square

Over the past few years, Brentford Square Shopping Centre has achieved significant milestones that have strengthened its position as a thriving retail precinct:

Security & Safety Enhancements:

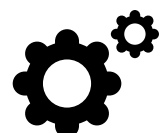
- Implementation and an upgrade of a well-managed security camera system to enhance trader and customer safety.

Successful Grant Funding for Events:

- Secured \$20,000 in funding from the Victorian Government's Small and Medium Events Grants Program to support the Christmas Market & Fair in 2023.

Strong Calendar of Events & Activations:

- Easter Fun, Scare in the Square (Halloween), and Christmas Fairs have become highly anticipated annual events, boosting foot traffic and business engagement.



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• **Sustained Low Vacancy Rate:**

- Few vacant shops, demonstrating strong trader retention and demand for retail spaces in the centre.

• **Parking & Accessibility Management:**

- Ample parking available, with a self-managed trader parking permit system that ensures fair and efficient use of space.

Commitment to Sustainability:

- Introduction of a Visy recycling station, promoting environmentally responsible practices within the precinct.

Brentford Square Shopping Centre continues to evolve and grow, maintaining its reputation as a vibrant, accessible, and community-driven shopping precinct. Through strong event programming, business support, infrastructure improvements, and sustainability initiatives, the centre remains a leading local retail destination in the City of Whitehorse.



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SWOT ANALYSIS FOR BRENTFORD SQUARE SHOPPING CENTRE

Strengths (Internal Advantages)

- **Established Local Presence:** Well-known and trusted shopping destination in the area.
- **Diverse Retail Mix:** Includes a strong mix of essential services, supermarkets, specialty stores, and dining options.
- **High Local Spending Power:** Whitehorse has high median property values and a well-off consumer base willing to spend.
- **Community-Focused Atmosphere:** Recognised as a family-friendly and socially connected shopping precinct.
- **Accessible Location:** Well-served by major road networks and public transport, making it easy for customers to visit.
- **Low Vacancy Rates:** High occupancy levels indicate strong tenant demand and a stable business environment.
- **Loyal Customer Base:** Many repeat visitors and strong community engagement.
- **Parking Availability:** Ample parking makes it a convenient shopping option compared to high-density precincts.
- **Strong Leadership:** Brentford Square benefits from strong leadership, driven by a committed committee that actively advocates for traders, fosters business growth, and ensures the successful implementation of marketing initiatives and events. This is further supported by a proactive centre management team that works collaboratively with businesses, oversees operational efficiencies, and ensures the precinct remains a safe, well-maintained, and thriving retail destination.

STRENGTHS

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WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses (Internal Challenges)

- **Limited Digital Presence:** Lacks a strong online marketplace or e-commerce integration for retailers. Few businesses are independently active online.
- **Aging Infrastructure:** Some parts of the shopping centre may require modernisation to compete with newer retail developments.
- **Limited Nighttime Economy:** Early store closures and lack of entertainment options reduce evening foot traffic.
- **Retailer Dependency on Traditional Shopping:** Some businesses may not be fully adapted to changing consumer behaviours, such as online shopping and click-and-collect services.
- **Potential for Stagnation:** Without regular updates and new attractions, the centre may struggle to maintain excitement and foot traffic.

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Opportunities (External Growth Potential)

- **Growing Population:** Whitehorse is projected to grow by 41,392 residents by 2036, increasing the customer base.
- **Multicultural Marketing & Retail Expansion:** Growing Chinese, Indian, and other multicultural communities provide opportunities for culturally tailored products, promotions, and events.
- **Expansion of Services:** More healthcare, wellness, and beauty services can cater to the increasing senior population.
- **E-commerce Integration:** Implementing online ordering, home delivery, and click-and-collect options to complement in-store shopping.
- **Sustainability Initiatives:** Promoting eco-friendly retail practices, waste reduction, and sustainability-focused businesses to align with community values.
- **Local Experience-Based Shopping:** Offering unique experiences such as pop-up markets, cultural festivals, and interactive workshops to differentiate from competitors.
- **Partnerships with Local Schools & Community Groups:** Engaging with schools and local organisations through sponsorships, events, and special promotions.
- **Evening Economy Development:** Introducing more casual dining, entertainment, or late-night shopping initiatives.

OPPORTUNITIES

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THREATS

Threats (External Risks)

- **Retail Competition:** Nearby shopping centres such as Forest Hill Chase, Box Hill Central, and Burwood One may attract shoppers away.
- **Online Shopping Growth:** Increasing consumer preference for e-commerce reduces in-person foot traffic.
- **Economic Uncertainty & Cost of Living Pressures:** Rising inflation and interest rates could lead to reduced discretionary spending.
- **Changing Demographics:** If the shopping centre does not evolve with the area's shifting cultural and generational needs, it risks losing relevance.
- **Parking & Traffic Issues:** Increasing congestion in Whitehorse and changes in transport habits could affect visitor convenience.
- **Council & Planning Regulations:** Potential zoning changes, increased rental costs, or regulatory restrictions could impact business operations. Noted with the vacant land at the centre's entranceway and the uncertainty of its future.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Brentford Square is **well-positioned as a community-focused retail centre**, with strong local loyalty and a diverse mix of stores. However, to remain competitive, it needs to modernize its infrastructure, enhance its digital presence, and cater to the growing multicultural and aging population. Investing in sustainability, experiential retail, and partnerships will help it stay ahead of competitors and strengthen its role as a thriving, local shopping hub.

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Trend Analysis

The population trends in the City of Whitehorse indicate significant changes that will shape the marketing strategy for Brentford Square Shopping Centre from 2026 to 2031.

The region is experiencing moderate population growth, with an expected increase of 41,392 residents by 2036, bringing the total population to 210,738. This growth is particularly concentrated in Box Hill, which is expected to drive demand for housing, services, and infrastructure. However, Brentford Square, situated in a more suburban and family-friendly setting, will likely continue to attract families, older couples, and established households.

Key Population Changes Influencing Marketing Strategy:

1. Household and Family Structure

- The City of Whitehorse has seen an increase in couples without children (+1,637 households) and lone-person households (+1,951 households).
- Families with children (33.1% of households) remain stable but are slightly lower than previous years, indicating a shift toward smaller or child-free households.
- A notable rise in one-parent families (+522 households) suggests an opportunity for targeted marketing towards single-parent families seeking convenience and affordability.

2. Aging Population and Economic Factors

- The strongest projected growth is among residents aged 70+ years, highlighting a need for services catering to older consumers.
- This aging trend will likely increase demand for healthcare, wellness, and lifestyle-related services.
- The median house price remains high at \$1.4M, making Whitehorse one of the more expensive areas in Melbourne. This suggests that while many residents have strong purchasing power, affordability and value-for-money offerings will remain key considerations.

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3. Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

- Whitehorse is becoming increasingly multicultural, with Mandarin (16%) and Cantonese (6%) being the most common languages spoken at home after English.
- The Chinese-born population makes up 13% of residents, followed by India at 4%.
- This demographic shift suggests that multilingual marketing efforts and culturally tailored promotions (e.g., Lunar New Year events, Asian cuisine-focused promotions) could enhance engagement.
- The visitor economy is driven by international students and the visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market, presenting opportunities to attract new customer segments through hospitality and specialty retail.

4. Economic and Retail Changes

- Local consumer spending in Whitehorse is strong, with over \$3.57 billion spent annually.
- However, residents spend \$2.42 billion outside of the area (escape spend) and \$2.12 billion online, indicating that local businesses need to enhance their digital presence and improve in-store experiences to retain spending within the community.
- The growth of e-commerce continues to impact traditional retail, reinforcing the importance of hybrid online-offline marketing strategies to maintain foot traffic at Brentford Square.

5. Sustainability and Community Values

- The Whitehorse 2040 Vision highlights sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity as key community priorities.
- Consumers are becoming increasingly conscious of eco-friendly businesses, supporting initiatives like zero-waste packaging, sustainable shopping, and locally sourced products.
- The emphasis on 20-minute neighbourhoods, where residents can meet their daily needs within a short distance, suggests an opportunity for Brentford Square to position itself as a convenient, community-centric hub.



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BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION

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MARKETING STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2026-2031

1. Family-Focused Engagement: While families with children remain important, marketing should also target single parents, young couples without children, and retirees.
2. Multicultural Marketing: Develop Mandarin and Cantonese-friendly promotions and signage, and host events celebrating key cultural festivals (e.g., Lunar New Year, Diwali).
3. Senior-Friendly Retail & Services: Expand healthcare, wellness, and leisure activities to cater to an aging population.
4. Digital Transformation: Strengthen e-commerce, local online marketplaces, and click-and-collect services to compete with online retail.
5. Sustainability Initiatives: Promote eco-friendly products, community sustainability events, and green retail practices.
6. Local Spending Campaigns: Encourage local shopping through loyalty programs, exclusive precinct-wide discounts, and in-store experiences that make shopping in person more attractive.

By aligning marketing efforts with these evolving population trends, Brentford Square can position itself as a **dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable shopping destination** that meets the needs of Whitehorse's diverse and changing community.

Sited Sources

Whitehorse Investment and Economic Development Strategy 2024-2028.pdf

Profile-City of Whitehorse-f82dcceb-f3fd-4e01-9819-806aadb6b53d.pdf

Whitehorse Retail Precinct Profile - July 2024 Update.pdf

Whitehorse-2040-Community-Vision-Booklet.pdf

Appendix 1



10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. Brentford Square Shopping Centre Strategic Business Plan 2026-2030

BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION

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CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation process for the renewal of the **Special Charge (Rate) Scheme for 2026-2031** was conducted to ensure transparency, trader engagement, and alignment with the needs of businesses at Brentford Square Shopping Centre.

At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 27th November 2024, the Brentford Square Traders Association (BSTA) Committee unanimously voted to renew the Special Charge (Rate) Scheme. It was formally recorded that there would be no increase in the charge, considering the current economic climate and the ongoing financial sustainability of the precinct. The committee recognised that continuing the Special Charge without an increase would allow for the ongoing delivery of marketing initiatives, events, streetscape improvements, and business development support.

To further inform and engage traders, in January 2025, a flyer was distributed to all businesses within the precinct (see Appendix). Our centre managers personally delivered these flyers and, in many cases, engaged in face-to-face discussions with traders about the importance of the Special Charge. The flyer clearly outlined how the funds are utilised and emphasized that without it, the centre would be unable to implement key initiatives that benefit all businesses. The messaging reinforced that traders are stronger when working collaboratively and that the Special Charge is vital for ensuring Brentford Square remains a thriving and well-supported precinct.

To provide further opportunity for discussion, two consultation workshops were held in February to allow traders to ask questions and provide input:

6th February at 3:00 PM

13th February at 5:30 PM

Unfortunately, attendance at these workshops was low, limiting broader in-person engagement. As a result, the BSTA took a more proactive approach by distributing trader surveys to all businesses within the precinct. These surveys were delivered in person, followed up via e-newsletters and digital communications, and revisited multiple times to encourage participation.

After extensive follow-ups, the final survey results showed:

- Of the 41 rateable properties, 34 businesses were eligible to participate (excluding vacancies, charity-run businesses, and the office of a Member of Parliament).
- 17 completed surveys were received from traders.
- Three additional letters of support were provided. These included letters from three of the larger businesses within Brentford Square including Woolworths, Chemist Warehouse and Dan Murphy's.
- We also received verbal feedback from several traders who were unable to officially participate in the surveys, as approval from their head office was required. While we cannot record their support officially, these conversations confirm that these businesses are in favour of the Special Charge renewal.

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. Brentford Square Shopping Centre Strategic Business Plan 2026-2030

BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION

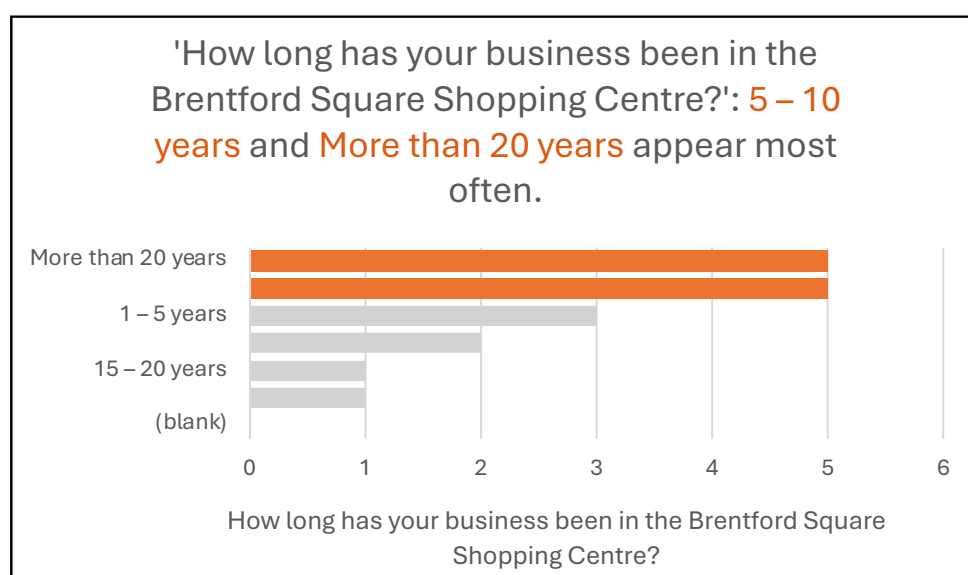
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It is important to note that three traders expressed dissatisfaction with the renewal of the Special Charge. One indicated that they would be leaving within the next two years, making the charge less relevant to them. Another stated that they were not interested in participating, while the third, a relatively new business to the centre, provided valuable feedback on improvements they would like to see. The Association believes this trader will become more actively involved, especially as they have recently joined the committee.

The Brentford Square Traders Association is committed to working with all three traders to provide support, address concerns, and ensure they benefit from the initiatives funded by the Special Charge. The Association will continue engaging with them to foster collaboration and deliver outcomes that contribute to their business success.)

While the uptake of the surveys was slow, and it took additional time to explain the purpose and functions of the Traders Association, the overall response demonstrated strong support for the continuation of the Special Charge. This process ensured that traders had multiple opportunities to ask questions, provide feedback, and contribute to the decision-making process. The consultation reaffirmed the importance of continued investment in marketing, events, and business support, ensuring that Brentford Square remains a thriving, attractive, and competitive retail destination.

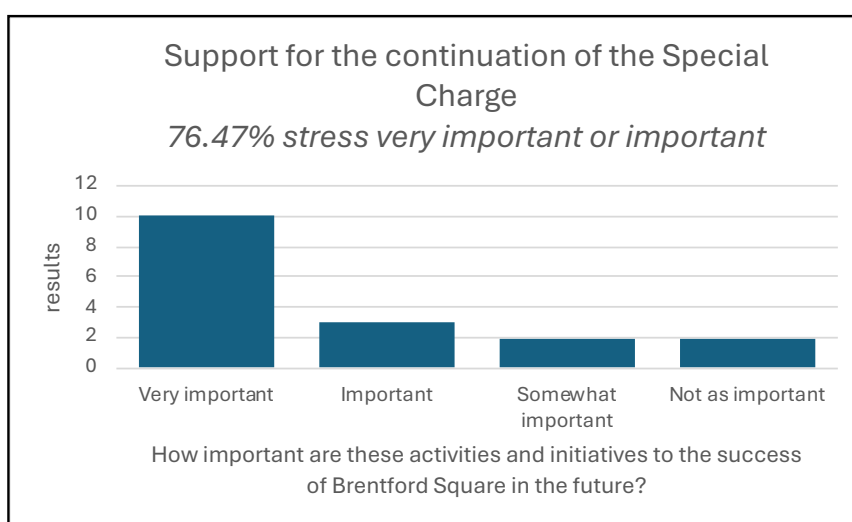
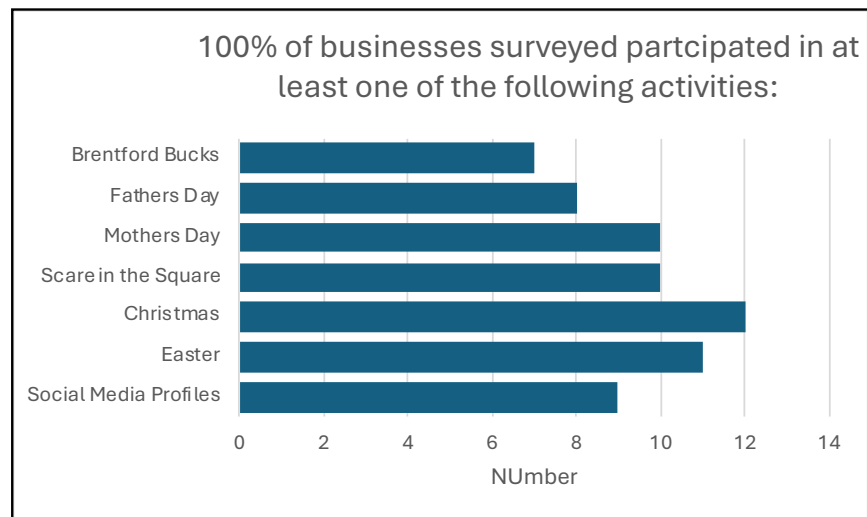
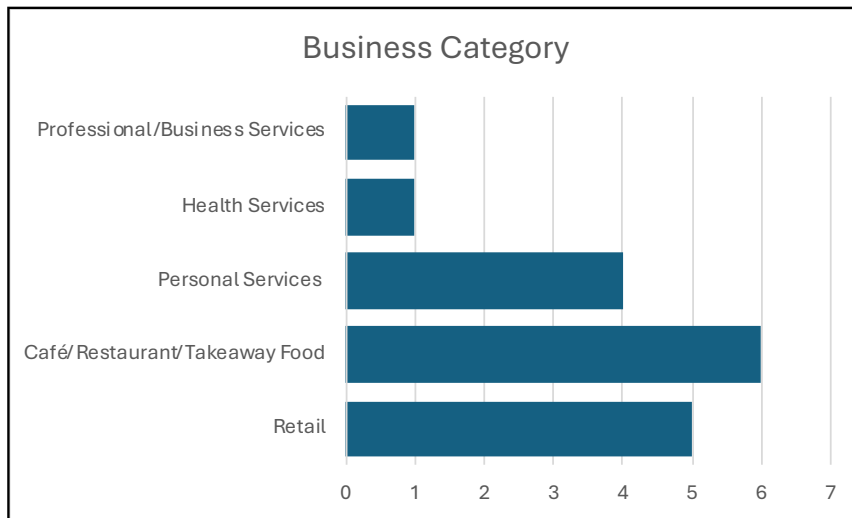
WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR BUSINESSES



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BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION

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10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. Brentford Square Shopping Centre Strategic Business Plan 2026-2030

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BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Brentford Square Traders Association (BSTA) aims to support, promote, and advocate for businesses within Brentford Square Shopping Centre, ensuring a thriving, dynamic, and community-focused retail precinct. Through effective marketing, engaging events, business support initiatives, and advocacy efforts, the association works to enhance the economic sustainability, accessibility, and overall shopping experience for traders, customers, and the broader Whitehorse community.

VISION STATEMENT

Brentford Square Shopping Centre will be a vibrant, welcoming, and future-ready retail precinct, known for its strong sense of community, diverse shopping experience, and engaging public spaces. By embracing innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity, the centre will continue to evolve, attracting new businesses, fostering local connections, and providing an enjoyable shopping and social destination for all generations.

PURPOSE

- To generate and manage the collective marketing, promotion, administration and infrastructure for the Brentford Square Shopping Centre
- To engage with businesses, represent their interest and collaborate to the collective benefit of the Shopping Centre.
- To develop relationships with our key stakeholders
- To engage and explore activities that may benefit our wider community

MANAGEMENT

The Brentford Square Traders Association has been formed to manage the Special Charge Program and they are responsible for the expenditure, reporting of these funds plus associated governance and contract of the centre manager/marketing team. A bookkeeper is also contracted on a quarterly basis and the financials are audited by an accountant annually.

Each year at an Annual General Meeting a volunteer committee is formed and elected from traders and business owners from the Brentford Square Shopping Centre. Positions of the committee are the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and general committee.

A united committee consisting of proactive business operators and a strong centre management can assist in a successful outcome for the Brentford Square Shopping Centre.

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BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION

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FUNDING

The Brentford Square Traders Association receives its funding from the Special Charge Program and the property owners and tenants of Brentford Square. Whitehorse City Council manages these funds on our behalf under our agreement. Based on our recommendations below, the current program annually collects \$46,013.00 for Marketing and Administrative activities and \$12,345.00 for Infrastructure and improvements. This provides the Brentford Square Traders Association with a total annual budget of \$58,787.00.

Recommendations

1. That the Special Charge Program be continued and confirmed for the Brentford Square Shopping Centre for five years commencing January 2026.
2. Given the current economic conditions and the absence of a compelling need, we recommend maintaining the Special Charge at its current level without any increase
3. That additional funding to further support the Brentford Square business is sourced through partnerships, lobbying stakeholders, applications for grants and gaining sponsorship opportunities.
4. That the funding for the next five years comprises of the Special Rate Marketing Scheme and the Special Rate Infrastructure Scheme.

MARKETING	%	AMOUNT
Administration	35%	\$22,806.81
Events and Promotions	34%	\$22,155.18
Communications	5%	\$2,550.21
Business Development	5%	\$2,550.21
Sub Total		\$51,004.20
INFRASTRUCTURE	21%	\$14,158.10
TOTAL	100%	\$65,162.30

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. Brentford Square Shopping Centre Strategic Business Plan 2026-2030

SECTION TWELVE

BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION

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KEY DIRECTIONS FOR BRENTFORD SQUARE SHOPPING CENTRE

1. Events

- Develop annual flagship events such as an Annual Market, Christmas Festival, and Family Fun Days to increase foot traffic and community engagement.
- Incorporate seasonal activations for key shopping periods (e.g., Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Halloween, Lunar New Year, Diwali).
- Host interactive promotions like treasure hunts, shopping challenges, or themed weekends to enhance customer experience.
- Leverage partnerships with local schools, community groups, and sporting clubs to support events.
- Investigate night-time activations, including late-night shopping events and outdoor dining experiences.

2. Promotions

- Introduce a new Brentford Square Gift Card program to encourage local spending.
- Collaborate with retailers to create precinct-wide discount campaigns, loyalty rewards, and "shop local" incentives.
- Align promotions with local celebrations and cultural events to engage with diverse demographics.
- Promote seasonal activities to encourage patronage
- Use collaborative giveaways and competitions that feature local traders, boosting awareness of the retail mix.
- Develop "Spend & Win" promotions that encourage increased in-store spending and return visits.

3. Marketing

- Establish an annual marketing plan with a clear budget and focus on branding Brentford Square as a family-friendly shopping destination.
- Increase digital presence through engaging social media campaigns, influencer collaborations, and targeted advertising.
- Develop a monthly e-newsletter for local residents featuring upcoming events, promotions, and trader spotlights.
- Strengthen SEO and website content to drive local search visibility for Brentford Square retailers.
- Partner with local media to feature trader stories and community-focused advertising.

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. Brentford Square Shopping Centre Strategic Business Plan 2026-2030

BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION

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4. Communications

- Implement consistent and transparent communication between traders, the business association, and customers.
- Develop a trader WhatsApp or Facebook group for sharing updates and collaboration.
- Regularly update a precinct-wide business directory/flyer to showcase all retailers and services.
- Establish a community noticeboard (both physical and digital) to promote offers and announcements.
- Engage in two-way dialogue with customers through surveys, feedback forms, and public Q&A sessions.

5. Streetscape & Advocacy

- Advocate for streetscape improvements such as enhanced lighting, green spaces, and footpath upgrades.
- Work with the local council to improve signage, accessibility, and public seating.
- Implement place-making initiatives, such as murals, seasonal decorations, and public art installations.
- Encourage outdoor dining extensions to support food and beverage businesses.
- Seek government funding and grants for beautification projects and sustainability initiatives.

6. Business Development & Mix

- Attract new, complementary businesses to fill retail gaps and enhance customer appeal.
- Work with landlords and real estate agents to activate vacant stores with pop-ups, short-term leases, and art installations.
- Support existing traders with business mentoring, marketing workshops, and customer service training.
- Foster collaborations between businesses, such as cross-promotions, bundled deals, and trader networking events.
- Monitor changing retail trends and customer preferences to inform the precinct's business mix strategy.

This framework will ensure Brentford Square evolves as a thriving, vibrant, and community-focused retail precinct that meets the needs of its diverse and growing population.



10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. Brentford Square Shopping Centre Strategic Business Plan 2026-2030

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BRENTFORD SQUARE -5 YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2026-2031

EVENTS

Activity	Description	Action	Timing	Budget
Annual Market & Christmas Festival	Host large-scale events with entertainment, markets, and community engagement	Secure sponsorships, book entertainment, promote widely	Annual	High
Lunar New Year & Diwali Celebrations	Introduce cultural celebrations to attract diverse audiences	Collaborate with cultural groups, organize performances and themed decor	Annual	Medium
Seasonal Activations	Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Halloween with interactive elements	Plan activations, engage traders, promote online and offline	Ongoing	Medium
Evening activation	Introduce evening events to attract different demographics	Coordinate traders, arrange music and food stalls	Annual	Medium

PROMOTIONS

Activity	Description	Action	Timing	Budget
Brentford Square Gift Card	Encourage local spending and cross-store engagement	Partner with traders, promote through events and social media	Ongoing	Medium
Shop Local Campaigns	Develop precinct-wide discount campaigns and spend back into our business	Create promotional materials, engage retailers, advertise widely	Ongoing	Medium
Spend & Win Promotions	Encourage in-store spending with prize-based incentives	Secure sponsorships, structure spending tiers, execute campaigns	Annual	High

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. Brentford Square Shopping Centre Strategic Business Plan 2026-2030

BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION

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MARKETING

Activity	Description	Action	Timing	Budget
Annual Marketing Plan	Develop a structured marketing strategy for branding and promotions	Allocate budget, set goals, coordinate marketing activities	Annual	High
Social Media Growth	Expand digital presence with engaging content and influencer partnerships	Develop a content calendar, increase advertising spend, monitor analytics	Ongoing	Medium
Trader Spotlights & Community Features	Highlight businesses through newsletters, blogs, and media partnerships	Interview traders, produce multimedia content, share on all platforms	Monthly	Low
Website Updates & Maintenance	Ensure the website remains current, user-friendly, and informative	Regularly update trader listings, event calendars, and SEO optimizations	Ongoing	Medium

COMMUNICATIONS

Activity	Description	Action	Timing	Budget
Trader Communication Platform	Enhance trader collaboration via WhatsApp, Facebook, or internal portal	Develop platform, onboard traders, manage regular updates	Ongoing	Low
Precinct-Wide Business Directory	Regularly update and distribute business listings to customers	Design and print directories, create an online version, promote updates	Annual	Medium
Customer Engagement Initiatives	Use surveys, feedback forms, and Q&A sessions to improve service	Distribute surveys, analyze data, implement improvements	Bi-annual	Low

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. Brentford Square Shopping Centre Strategic Business Plan 2026-2030

BRENTFORD SQUARE TRADERS ASSOCIATION

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STREETSCAPE AND ADVOCACY

Activity	Description	Action	Timing	Budget
Streetscape Beautification	Enhance public spaces with art, greenery, and better lighting	Work with council, apply for grants, involve community groups	Ongoing	High
Outdoor Dining & Seating Enhancements	Improve outdoor spaces for food and beverage businesses	Identify potential spaces, work with council for permits	Ongoing	Medium
Wayfinding & Signage Improvements	Ensure clear and modern signage throughout the precinct	Audit current signage, design and install new wayfinding elements	Bi-annual	Medium
Piped Music & Ambient Sound	Introduce background music to enhance the shopping experience	Work with council and businesses to install speakers in key areas	Ongoing	Medium

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND MIX

Activity	Description	Action	Timing	Budget
Pop-Up Shops & Vacant Store Activation	Encourage new businesses and temporary activations in empty spaces	Work with landlords, create short-term leasing incentives	Ongoing	Medium
Trader Training & Workshops	Offer digital marketing, customer service, and business growth training	Host workshops, provide online resources, invite industry experts	Quarterly	Low
Retail Mix Strategy	Monitor and adjust tenant mix to meet consumer needs	Conduct research, analyze trends, engage landlords	Annual	Medium

**10.2 – ATTACHMENT 1. Brentford Square Shopping Centre Strategic Business Plan
2026-2030**

APPENDIX - [Follow this link](#)

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 2. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030- Rateable Properties and Charges

Attachment 2

Brentford Square Shopping Centre - Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030

Rateable Properties and Charges FY 2025-2026

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5
Assessment Number	Property address	2025/26 Annual Charge Marketing	2025/26 Annual Charge Infrastructure	Total Amount Payable
835 9	12 BRENTFORD SQ			
10088490 7	Shop 12 Brentford Square	\$399.51	\$110.80	\$510.31
10088491 5	Level 1 /12 Brentford Square	\$283.65	\$78.69	\$362.34
10088492 3	Level 2 /12 Brentford Square	\$283.65	\$78.69	\$362.34
837 5	16 BRENTFORD SQ	\$967.01	\$268.29	\$1,235.30
833 4	8 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,088.00	\$301.93	\$1,389.93
850 8	41 BRENTFORD SQ	\$863.69	\$239.62	\$1,103.31
836 7	14 BRENTFORD SQ	\$967.01	\$268.29	\$1,235.30
861 5	13 BRENTFORD SQ	\$970.60	\$269.36	\$1,239.96
202284 6	4 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,120.15	\$310.78	\$1,430.94
202285 3	6 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,130.80	\$313.91	\$1,444.71
863 1	3 BRENTFORD SQ	\$972.95	\$270.18	\$1,243.14
844 1	30 BRENTFORD SQ	\$854.17	\$237.06	\$1,091.23
855 7	27 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,045.40	\$290.10	\$1,335.50
854 0	29-31 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,422.28	\$394.91	\$1,817.19
1346 6	484 CANTERBURY RD	\$1,448.19	\$401.97	\$1,850.16
830 0	2 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,497.19	\$415.69	\$1,912.88
860 7	15 BRENTFORD SQ	\$955.14	\$265.01	\$1,220.15
862 3	5-11 BRENTFORD SQ	\$3,937.48	\$1,093.63	\$5,031.12
848 2	45 BRENTFORD SQ	\$863.69	\$239.62	\$1,103.31
857 3	21 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,161.68	\$322.41	\$1,484.08
847 4	47 BRENTFORD SQ	\$863.69	\$239.62	\$1,103.31
834 2	10 BRENTFORD SQ	\$967.01	\$268.29	\$1,235.30
838 3	18 BRENTFORD SQ	\$967.01	\$268.29	\$1,235.30

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 2. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030- Rateable Properties and Charges

1345 8	486-500 CANTERBURY RD	\$1,777.82	\$493.62	\$2,271.44
859 9	17 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,047.65	\$290.76	\$1,338.42
852 4	35 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,041.72	\$289.08	\$1,330.79
845 8	51 BRENTFORD SQ	\$863.69	\$239.62	\$1,103.31
190376 4	20-22 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,019.19	\$282.78	\$1,301.96
40228 9	23 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,165.31	\$323.53	\$1,488.84
841 7	24 BRENTFORD SQ	\$854.17	\$237.06	\$1,091.23
168933 0	504 CANTERBURY RD	\$2,258.89	\$627.20	\$2,886.09
849 0	43 BRENTFORD SQ	\$863.69	\$239.62	\$1,103.31
858 1	19 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,047.76	\$290.76	\$1,338.52
864 9	1 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,148.67	\$318.87	\$1,467.55
865 6	REAR 1 BRENTFORD SQ	\$891.03	\$247.96	\$1,139.00
6396 6	2A STEVENS RD	\$6,037.76	\$1,676.95	\$7,714.71
851 6	37-39 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,105.97	\$306.89	\$1,412.86
853 2	33 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,117.70	\$310.27	\$1,427.97
843 3	28 BRENTFORD SQ	\$854.17	\$237.06	\$1,091.23
40227 1	25 BRENTFORD SQ	\$1,147.55	\$318.46	\$1,466.01
168931 4	502 CANTERBURY RD	\$1,237.71	\$343.60	\$1,581.31
842 5	26 BRENTFORD SQ	\$854.17	\$237.06	\$1,091.23
846 6	49 BRENTFORD SQ	\$863.69	\$239.62	\$1,103.31
TOTAL		\$52,228.30	\$14,497.89	66726.1952

**10.2 – ATTACHMENT 2. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030-
Rateable Properties and Charges**

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 3. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030- Proposed Declarations

ATTACHMENT 3

Brentford Square Shopping Centre

Proposed Declaration of Special Charge for Marketing and Promotion

1. That Council proposes to declare a Special Charge under section 163(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989* (**Act**) for the purposes of defraying expenses to be incurred by Council in, administratively only and subject to the approval and direction of Council, providing funds to the body operating and known as the Brentford Square Traders' Association Incorporated (**Traders' Association**) such funds to be used for the purposes of promotion, marketing, business development and the appointment of a part time Shopping Centre Coordinator (**Coordinator**) as agreed to between Council and the Traders' Association (**Scheme**), all of which are associated with the encouragement of retail and commercial activity and economic development in the Brentford Square Shopping Centre (**the Centre**).
2. That the proposed Special Charge will be based on geographic criteria, having regard to the location of those rateable properties in the area of the Scheme that are presently (or are reasonably capable of) being used for, commercial, retail or professional purposes, with the addresses of such rateable properties being more particularly described and listed in column 1 and 2 of the table forming **Annexure 1** to this proposed declaration, which rateable properties are otherwise shown as being situated within the highlighted areas enclosed by continuous thick dark line on the plan forming **Annexure 2** to this proposed declaration.
3. That in performing functions and exercising powers in relation to activities associated with the encouragement of retail and commercial activity and economic development in the area for which the Special Charge is to be declared, Council determines that the total amount of the Special Charge to be raised will be (and that Council intends to levy) an amount of \$52,228 per annum, raising in total an amount of \$261,140 over the five year period of the Scheme, with such amount being the total cost of the performance of the function and the exercise of the power by Council and the total amount to be levied being (in relation to the encouragement of retail and commercial activity and economic development) and with such annual amounts (after the first year) to be adjusted annually in accordance with movements in the Consumer Price Index (CPI)).
4. That the proposed Special Charge is to be declared (and will remain in force) for the period commencing on 1 January 2026 and ending on 31 December 2030, being a period of five years.

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 3. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030- Proposed Declarations

5. That the area for which the proposed Special Charge is to be declared is the area containing all of the rateable land known as the Brentford Square Shopping Centre, as otherwise shown as being situated within the highlighted areas enclosed by continuous thick dark line on the plan forming **Annexure 2** to this proposed declaration.

6. That the land in relation to which the proposed Special Charge is to be declared is all that rateable land described and listed in column 1 and 2 of the table forming **Annexure 1** to this proposed declaration.

7. That the Special Charge will be assessed and levied as follows –

a) for the first year, the Special Charge will comprise the amounts that are set out in column 3 of the table forming **Annexure 1** to this proposed declaration; and

b) for each subsequent year, the proposed Special Charge will comprise the amounts that were payable in the immediate previous year, adjusted in accordance with movements in the CPI (but shall not be less than the amount payable in the immediately preceding year).

8. That Council considers there will be a special benefit to the persons required to pay the proposed Special Charge (being the owners and the occupiers of the properties listed in column 1 and 2 of the table forming **Annexure 1** to this proposed declaration) in that there will be a special benefit over and above that available to persons who are not subject to the proposed Special Charge, and directly and indirectly the viability of the Centre as a commercial, retail and professional area will be enhanced through increased economic activity because of the following –

a) improved marketing and promotion for the Centre as a whole increasing the public awareness, profile, image and perception of the Centre and attracting increased patronage to the Centre;

b) all businesses will have better access to advice, information and assistance on latest trends in marketing, retailing, small business and promotion;

c) all businesses will benefit from having an experienced person/ team coordinating their activities for their mutual advantage and acting as a single liaison point, lobbyist and spokesperson to represent local business within the Centre and deal with various arms of government (Federal, State and Local); and

d) the value and the use, occupation and enjoyment of the properties and the individual businesses in the Scheme area will be maintained or enhanced through increased economic activity.

**10.2 – ATTACHMENT 3. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030-
Proposed Declarations**

9. That Council considers only those properties included in the Scheme area as proposed will derive a relevant special benefit from the imposition of the proposed Special Charge and that there are no wider special benefits or community benefits to be taken into account in relation to the proposed Scheme. Council presently considers and formally determines for the purposes of sections 163(2)(a), 163(2A) and 163(2B) of the Act that the estimated proportion of the total benefits of the Scheme to which the performance of the function or the exercise of power relates (including all special benefits and community benefits) that will accrue as special benefits to all of the persons who are liable to pay the proposed Special Charge is in a benefit ratio of one to one (or 100%).

10. That having regard to the preceding parts of this proposed declaration, the proposed Special Charge will be levied by sending notices to the owners or the occupiers of the properties included in the Scheme which will require that the initial Special Charge set out in column 3 of the table forming Annexure 1 to this proposed declaration and the subsequent Special Charge under this Scheme must be paid in full by the date specified in the notices, which will be a date not less than thirty days after the issue of the notice, or if an owner or occupier so elects to pay the Special Charge by four equal instalments (or near equal in respect to the final instalment) by the dates fixed by the Minister by notice published in the Government Gazette being the dates on which payment by four instalments of rates and Charge are fixed pursuant to section 167(2) of the Act, and further declares that interest shall be charged on all late payments of the Special Charge as set from time to time by Council pursuant to section 172 of the Act.

11. That, if the proposed Special Charge is declared, the Traders' Association be authorised to administer the proceeds of the Special Charge on behalf of Council on the express condition that the Traders' Association maintains and renews its funding agreement with Council for the period of the Special Charge.

12. That if the proposed Special Charge is declared, no incentives will be given by Council for the payment of those Charge before the due date for payment.

13. That the proposed declaration will expire if the Special Charge is not levied to each person liable to pay it within 12 months after the day on which the declaration to which the Special Charge relates is made.

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 3. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030- Proposed Declarations

Annexure 1 – Brentford Square Shopping Centre – Marketing Special Charge Schedule by Property 2025-2026

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3
Property address	Suburb	2025/26 Annual Charge Marketing
Shop 12 Brentford Square	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 399.51
Level 1 /12 Brentford Square	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 283.65
Level 2 /12 Brentford Square	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 283.65
16 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 967.01
8 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1088.00
41 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 863.69
14 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 967.01
13 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 970.60
4 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1120.15
6 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1130.80
3 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 972.95
30 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 854.17
27 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1045.40
29-31 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1422.28
484 CANTERBURY RD	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1448.19
2 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1497.19
15 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 955.14
5-11 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 3937.48
45 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 863.69
21 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1161.68
47 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 863.69
10 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 967.01
18 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 967.01
486-500 CANTERBURY RD	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1777.82
17 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1047.65
35 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1041.72
51 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 863.69
20-22 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1019.19
23 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1165.31
24 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 854.17
504 CANTERBURY RD	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 2258.89
43 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 863.69
19 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1047.76
1 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1148.67
REAR 1 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 891.03
2A STEVENS RD	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 6037.76
37-39 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1105.97

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 3. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030- Proposed Declarations

33 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1117.70
28 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 854.17
25 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1147.55
502 CANTERBURY RD	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 1237.71
26 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 854.17
49 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 863.69
		\$ 52228.30

Annexure 2 – Brentford Square Shopping Centre – Rateable land



Brentford Square Shopping Centre

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 3. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030- Proposed Declarations

Proposed Declaration of Special Charge for Infrastructure

1. That Council declares a Special Charge under section 163(1) of the *Local Government Act 1989 (Act)* for the purposes of defraying expenses to be incurred by Council in, administratively only and subject to the approval and direction of Council, providing funds to the body operating and known as the Brentford Square Traders' Association (***the Association***) to be used for the purposes of providing and maintaining new physical infrastructure for the benefit of the Brentford Square Shopping Centre (***the Centre***) in the form of signage, fixed shopping centre decorations, logos, mural paintings, security, audio systems and other similar physical improvements as agreed to between Council and the Association (***the Scheme***), all of which are associated with the encouragement of retail and commercial activity and economic development in the Centre and the physical improvement of the Centre.
2. That the proposed Special Charge will be based on geographic criteria, having regard to the location of those rateable properties in the area of the Scheme that are presently (or are reasonably capable of) being used for, commercial, retail or professional purposes, with the addresses of such rateable properties being more particularly described and listed in column 1 and 2 of the table forming **Annexure 1** to this proposed declaration, which rateable properties are otherwise shown as being situated within the highlighted areas enclosed by continuous dark line on the plan forming **Annexure 2** to this proposed declaration.
3. That in performing functions and exercising powers in relation to activities associated with the encouragement of retail and commercial activity and economic development in the area for which the Special Charge is to be declared, Council determines that the total amount of the Special Charge to be raised will be (and that Council intends to levy) an amount of \$14,498 per annum, raising in total an amount of \$72,490 over the five year period of the Scheme, with such amount being the total cost of the performance of the function and the exercise of the power by Council and the total amount to be levied being (in relation to the encouragement of retail and commercial activity and economic development) and with such annual amounts (after the first year) to be adjusted annually in accordance with movements in the Consumer Price Index (CPI)).
4. That the proposed Special Charge is to be declared (and will remain in force) for the period commencing on 1 January 2026 and ending on 31 December 2030, being a period of five years.
5. That the area for which the proposed Special Charge is to be declared is the area containing all of the rateable land known as the Brentford Square Shopping Centre, as otherwise shown as being situated within the highlighted areas enclosed by continuous dark line on the plan forming **Annexure 2** to this proposed declaration.

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 3. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030- Proposed Declarations

6. That the land in relation to which the proposed Special Charge is to be declared is all that rateable land described and listed in column 1 and 2 of the table forming **Annexure 1** to this proposed declaration.

7. That the Special Charge will be assessed and levied as follows –

a) for the first year, the Special Charge will comprise the amounts that are set out in column 3 of the table forming **Annexure 1** to this proposed declaration; and

b) for each subsequent year, the proposed Special Charge will comprise the amounts that were payable in the immediate previous year, adjusted in accordance with movements in the CPI (but shall not be less than the amount payable in the immediately preceding year).

8. That Council considers there will be a special benefit to the persons required to pay the proposed Special Charge (being the owners and the occupiers of the properties listed in column 1 and 2 of the table forming **Annexure 1** to this proposed declaration) in that there will be a special benefit over and above that available to persons who are not subject to the proposed Special Charge, and directly and indirectly the viability of the Centre as a commercial, retail and professional area will be enhanced through increased economic activity because of the following –

a) the provision and maintenance of improved physical infrastructure in the form of signage, fixed shopping centre decorations, logos, mural paintings, security, audio systems and other similar physical improvements;

b) further, Council considers that as a result of the provision and maintenance of improved physical infrastructure for the shopping centre the value and the use, occupation and enjoyment of the properties and the individual businesses in the Scheme area will be maintained or enhanced, and

c) the value and the use, occupation and enjoyment of the properties and the individual businesses in the Scheme area will be maintained or enhanced through increased economic activity.

9. That Council considers only those properties included in the Scheme area as proposed will derive a relevant special benefit from the imposition of the proposed Special Charge and that there are no wider special benefits or community benefits to be taken into account in relation to the proposed Scheme. Council presently considers and formally determines for the purposes of sections 163(2)(a), 163(2A) and 163(2B) of the Act that the estimated proportion of the total benefits of the Scheme to which the performance of the function or the

**10.2 – ATTACHMENT 3. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030-
Proposed Declarations**

exercise of power relates (including all special benefits and community benefits) that will accrue as special benefits to all of the persons who are liable to pay the proposed Special Charge is in a benefit ratio of one to one (or 100%).

10. That having regard to the preceding parts of this proposed declaration, the proposed Special Charge will be levied by sending notices to the owners or the occupiers of the properties included in the Scheme which will require that the initial Special Charge set out in column 3 of the table forming Annexure 1 to this proposed declaration and the subsequent Special Charge under this Scheme must be paid in full by the date specified in the notices, which will be a date not less than thirty days after the issue of the notice, or if an owner or occupier so elects to pay the Special Charge by four equal instalments (or near equal in respect to the final instalment) by the dates fixed by the Minister by notice published in the Government Gazette being the dates on which payment by four instalments of rates and charges are fixed pursuant to section 167(2) of the Act, and further declares that interest shall be charged on all late payments of the Special Charge as set from time to time by Council pursuant to section 172 of the Act.

11. That, if the proposed Special Charge is declared, the Traders' Association be authorised to administer the proceeds of the Special Charge on behalf of Council on the express condition that the Traders' Association maintains and renews its funding agreement with Council for the period of the Special Charge.

12. That if the proposed Special Charge is declared, no incentives will be given by Council for the payment of those charges before the due date for payment.

13. That the proposed declaration will expire if the Special Charge is not levied to each person liable to pay it within 12 months after the day on which the declaration to which the Special Charge relates is made.

**Annexure 1 – Brentford Square Shopping Centre – Infrastructure Special Charge
Schedule by Property 2025-2026**

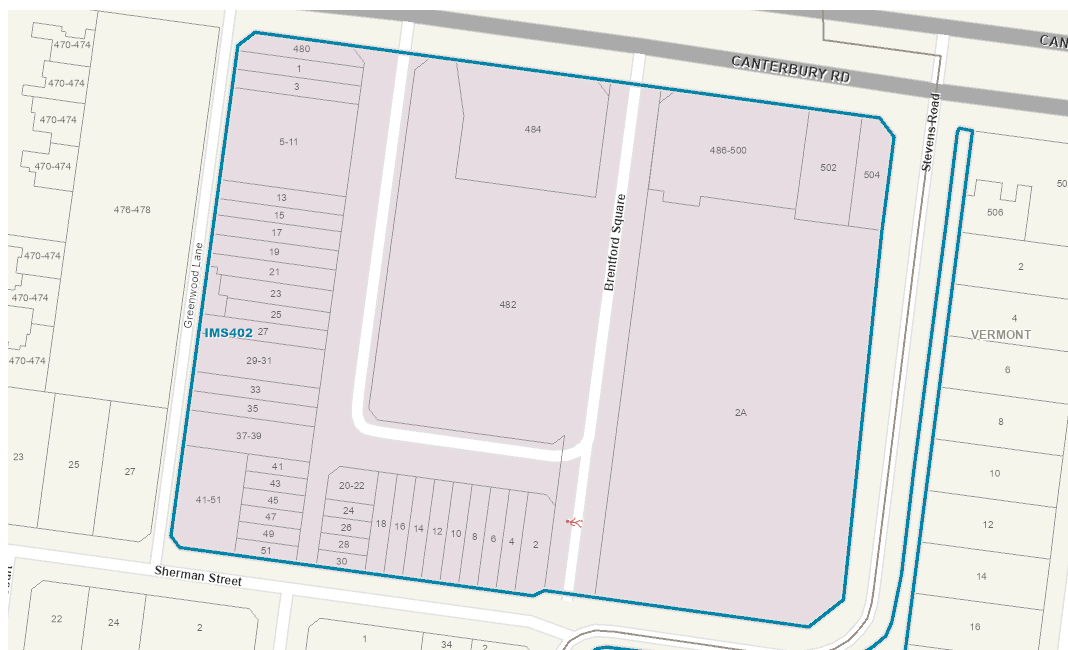
10.2 – ATTACHMENT 3. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030- Proposed Declarations

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3
Property address	Suburb	2025/26 Annual Charge Infrastructure
Shop 12 Brentford Square	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$110.80
Level 1 /12 Brentford Square	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$ 8.69
Level 2 /12 Brentford Square	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$78.69
16 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$268.29
8 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$301.93
41 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$239.62
14 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$268.29
13 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$269.36
4 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$310.78
6 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$313.91
3 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$270.18
30 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$237.06
27 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$290.10
29-31 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$394.91
484 CANTERBURY RD	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$401.97
2 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$415.69
15 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$265.01
5-11 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$1093.63
45 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$239.62
21 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$322.41
47 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$239.62
10 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$268.29
18 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$268.29
486-500 CANTERBURY RD	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$493.62
17 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$290.76
35 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$289.08
51 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$239.62
20-22 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$282.78
23 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$323.53
24 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$237.06
504 CANTERBURY RD	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$627.20
43 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$239.62
19 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$290.76
1 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$318.87
REAR 1 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$247.96

10.2 – ATTACHMENT 3. Brentford Square Special Charge Renewal 2026-2030- Proposed Declarations

2A STEVENS RD	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$1676.95
37-39 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$306.89
33 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$310.27
28 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$237.06
25 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$318.46
502 CANTERBURY RD	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$343.60
26 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$237.06
49 BRENTFORD SQ	FOREST HILL VIC 3131	\$239.62
		\$14497.89

Annexure 2 – Brentford Square Shopping Centre – Rateable land



**10.3 Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) and
Region Shared Service Provisions**

Attachment 1 ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029

Strategic Plan 2025 - 2029

DRAFT

Version	Date	Status
1 Working draft	February 2025	Not circulated
2 Draft for circulation	16 April 2025	Following ERG - 11 April meeting

Add images and council logos

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029**Contents**

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Indigenous acknowledgement

The ERG recognises the Traditional Owners of the land we call the eastern region. We acknowledge their rich cultural heritage and spiritual connection to the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and value their ongoing contribution to the cultural heritage of the region.

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029

Background & context

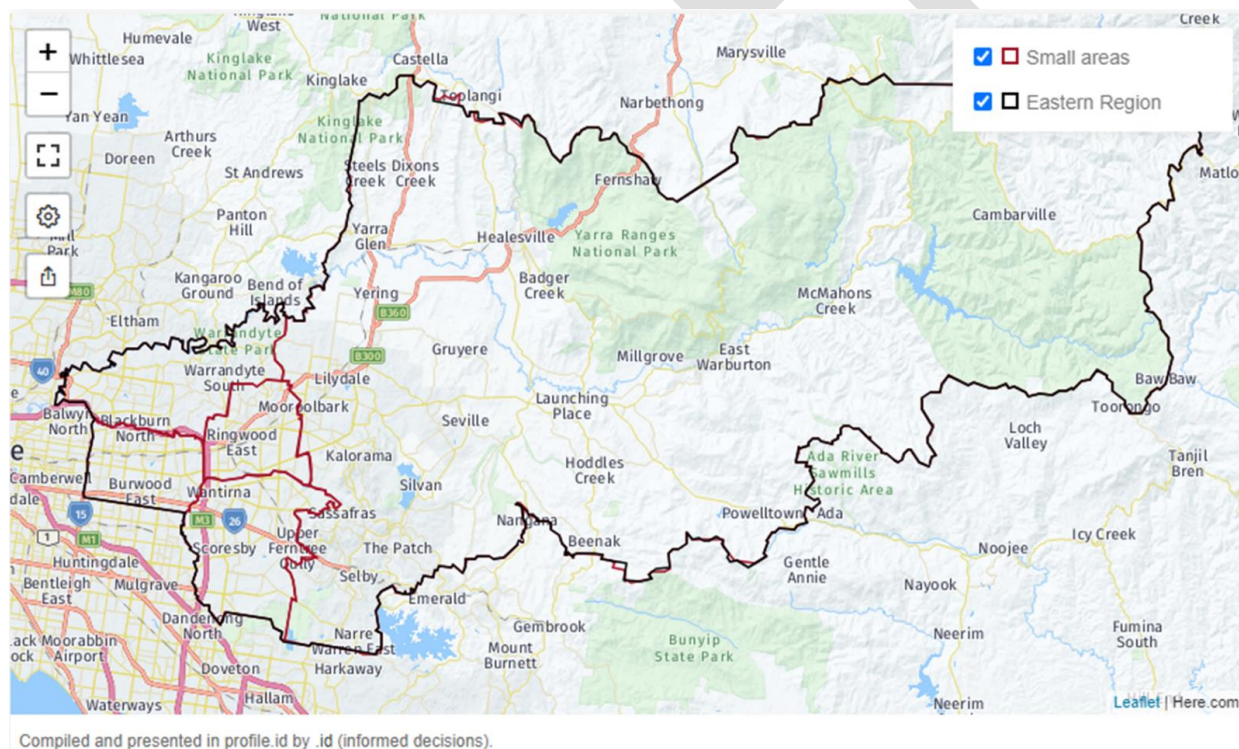
Who we are

The Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) comprises five local government authorities of eastern Melbourne - Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse, and Yarra Ranges.

The eastern region is the traditional home of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

ERG councils collaborate and partner on shared priorities through advocacy, integrated planning, shared services, and joint procurement to benefit the communities of the region.

The region extends from 15 kilometres to Melbourne's CBD eastwards into the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. It is a major population centre with a significant industry base. Specialisations are in advanced manufacturing, wholesale /distribution, health services, education (including Universities and TAFE institutes), as well as retail, tourism, and other service industries. The area includes the Box Hill Metropolitan Activity Centre, Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre, the Bayswater Business Precinct, and major education and health services.



Residents enjoy a choice of health and recreation facilities, local and regional shopping destinations, access to leading schools and tertiary institutions, and some of Victoria's best recreational areas. The region functions as Melbourne's lungs, with extensive green wedge and natural areas, mature canopy trees and is Melbourne's primary water catchment.

Recent State Government commitments to housing growth seek a 71 per cent increase in housing by 2050. Without a commitment to ensure community infrastructure keeps pace with growth existing levels of amenity will be impacted.

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029

The region's economy is significant, hosting 11 per cent of Greater Melbourne's jobs and generating over \$49 billion Gross Regional Product. While the manufacturing sector is of greatest value it is not the largest employer. The top five employing industries are health care & social assistance, retail trade, education & training, manufacturing, and construction.



Total population

746,067

(Approximately 14% of Greater Melbourne's total)



Total Land areas (hectares)

282,120

(28% of Greater Melbourne's 999,251 hectares)



Gross regional product (\$M)

\$49,478

(Approximately 11% of Greater Melbourne's total)

What we do

'Our vision is for the region to be connected, healthy, sustainable and prosperous, supported by financially secure, high performing councils.'

To achieve our vision the ERG will:

- be a catalyst for collaboration and trusted voice on regionally significant matters
- work to create an enabling operating environment
- support councils to be more efficient and effective
- advocate and plan to improve access to infrastructure and services across the region

To be successful we focus on:

- activities that benefit all ERG councils and reduce duplication
- projects that have active support and are achievable
- avoiding competing interests and tensions
- strong engagement and building productive working relationships critical to our success
- good governance and management of ERG resources

How we work:

Collaboration and partnerships are critical to how we work. Our collective concerns are informed both by their impacts and by our ability to impact change and achieve shared outcomes

Many external factors impact on the region, others involve shared responsibilities, and many are often beyond local government's direct control.

Our responses range from awareness raising to direct action in support of our vision and four pillars. Our Strategic Plan is implemented through a focussed number of regional actions that consider the following criteria:

- is it a big issue for the region (impacting and/or benefitting all councils)?
- will our action lead to better community outcomes?
- is it achievable – will we make a difference?
- will we create shared value for ERG councils?
- will we reduce duplication / competition?

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029

What's important to us

The ERG councils have more in common than what sets the group apart. Through extensive community engagement, Councils identified what is most important to their communities, and together for the region. These are grouped into four areas, or pillars: People, Places, Economy, and Environment and a longer-term regional outcome and key stakeholders have been identified for each.

People



PEOPLE

Resilient, cohesive communities who enjoy an improving quality of life, great access to services and better health and wellbeing.

- Eastern Health
- Eastern Volunteers
- Eastern Access Community Health (EACH)
- Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA); Homelessness & Social Housing Charter Group
- VicHealth and Departments including Education; Health; Families, Fairness & Housing; Emergency Management Victoria

Improving community health and wellbeing is central to diverse, inclusive and cohesive communities, better able to withstand major shocks and stresses. Equity of access to opportunity and addressing hardship and disadvantage builds social cohesion and increases community safety, while improving employment and life outcomes.

Increasing rates of crime, particularly family violence remains a complex issue for all levels of government. A more strategic, regional response for community safety is needed, and to address underlying causal factors such as access to secure and affordable housing, education and employment.

Rapid population growth is the biggest challenge facing ERG councils in their efforts to support communities. It will directly impact communities' ability to access the services and community infrastructure they depend on. The perception of government that the region can simply absorb and accommodate growth without the focussed funding support available to Melbourne's growth areas will compound these impacts.

Opportunities in the region exist to share council services to make them more efficient and effective. This may relate to internal council functions or to service areas such as immunisation, school crossing supervisors, animal management, environmental health, parks and gardens to regional library administration.

Places



PLACES

Great places that foster social cohesion, equality of opportunity, are resource efficient and healthy, in a region that's easy to get around by active or public transport for short distances.

- Infrastructure Victoria
- Department of Transport and Planning
- Transport advocacy groups such as Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF), Bicycle Victoria (BV), Eastern Transport Coalition (ETC)
- Eastern Region Trails Working Group (ERTWG)
- Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA)
- Planning and development industry peaks (PIA, PCV, UDIA, etc.)
- Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environments (CASBE)

Population growth increases demands on public spaces and facilities and changes how we move around. Active centres build neighbourhoods and support economic, social and cultural activities. Vibrant activity centres are essential for high amenity neighbourhoods and to achieve living locally. Housing targets set by the State Government in *Plan for Victoria* require ERG Councils to plan for an additional 212,500 dwellings by 2050, an increase of 71 per cent on existing dwelling stock. This has significant implications for community infrastructure that will either need to be newly provided or

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029

upgraded to meet future demand. Collaboration is required to clearly communicate these community infrastructure needs to State Government and ensure that they are provided for in key locations in the region.

Transport connections across the region have not kept pace with needs, and increasing congestion has made travel to jobs and services more difficult. There are opportunities for advocacy and collaborative integrated transport planning with State Government; to review and invest in bus services; and for other practical and cost-effective improvements that support people to access work, study and services. Other opportunities for joint procurement, integrated planning, and for shared services exist around asset management and to leverage regional strengths and knowledge through centres of excellence.

Economy



ECONOMY

Local employment opportunities support a diverse and adaptable workforce who enjoy a connected, competitive, and prosperous future.

- Melbourne's East Regional Economic Development Group (MEREDG)
- North-East Local Jobs & Skills Taskforce
- Economic Growth Victoria
- Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENS)
- Secondary and Tertiary education sectors
- Industry groups such as SEMMA and NORTH Link

The region's economy is significant and diverse and enjoys well-developed infrastructure and access to a highly skilled workforce. In our activity centres and across specialised activity clusters are 11 per cent of Greater Melbourne's jobs that contribute around \$50 billion in Gross Regional Product (GRP). A growing number and diversity of local jobs and businesses are needed to sustain local communities and support a high quality of life. While regional employment has grown, the number of positions advertised online has decreased nearly 50 per cent since the peak of 10,489 in July 2022.

Opportunities exist around a shared vision and effective collaboration for increasing local employment in activity centres, business precincts such as Bayswater, and to support key sectors such as tourism and agriculture in the outer east. Leveraging State Government precinct planning could result in better local employment outcomes. Resource conservation and climate action can also stimulate uptake of new technologies and create new industries and jobs.

Environment



ENVIRONMENT

Environmental stewardship and regional responses to sustainability, with spaces for people and nature where healthy ecosystems support healthy people and growing economies.

- Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action (EAGA)
- Sustainability Victoria
- Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
- Melbourne Water
- Integrated Water Management Forum
- Eastern Region Trails Working Group
- Recycling Victoria; Sustainability Victoria; Tourism Victoria

Globally there is significant concern about the future of the planet and the need to address climate change and resource consumption for sustainable living. Human activity is leading to a hotter, drier climate with more extreme weather events causing fires, floods and landslides. Access to clean air, water and to nature are central to health and wellbeing.

While the region is known for its extensive parks and leafy suburbs, redressing the fastest rate of tree canopy loss in Melbourne will be more challenging with growth. Linking open spaces across the region for biodiversity, urban heat reduction and active transport is a focus for action. Resilience to the impacts of climate change is a common focus, particularly in areas of flooding around the Yarra River and Dandenong Creek, with greater alignment required between flood agencies. Councils in the region aspire to achieve and maintain carbon neutrality.

Resource conservation and climate action can also help stimulate economic activity and enhance social cohesion.

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029

Our strategic priorities

To support the four pillars, five strategic priorities have been identified, informed by the emerging Council Plans. For each, actions are identified that seek multiple benefits across pillars, supported by ERG governance, operations and advocacy.

Strategic Priority 1 - Build shared services and increase joint procurement

Shared services and joint procurement present opportunities to maintain and improve council services in a rate-capped, fiscally constrained environment.

Despite potential benefits, significant technical, financial, political and risk barriers exist. The ERG is committed to developing a longer-term, logical pathway to increase shared services and joint procurement by councils in the region and to undertake the foundational work required to see this occur. This would:

- interrogate previous collaborative work by councils and LGV to inform shared service opportunities
- leverage regional knowledge and expertise to identify opportunities (both quick wins and longer term)
- benchmark IT platforms and forward commitments to create a 10–20-year vision towards a common platform
- understand corporate governance options best suited to benefit realisation and managing risk and reward.

Priority 1: Build shared services and increase joint procurement initiatives

1: Shared Services Roadmap: detailed analysis of short-listed opportunity areas to develop an implementation plan.

2: IT Integration Vision: 10-20-year vision to align ICT / ERP platforms and approaches.

3: Pilot one or two shared services / joint procurements that meet the agreed criteria.

Strategic Priority 2 - Enhance regional infrastructure

With a 71 per cent increase of housing by 2050 (212,500 additional dwellings), new and upgraded community infrastructure will be needed to meet future residents' demand. *Plan for Victoria* fails to demonstrate how and where additional infrastructure will be delivered.

While Infrastructure Victoria's draft new *30-year Infrastructure Plan* recognises the challenges of providing infrastructure in a fiscally constrained environment, the assumption remains that community infrastructure needs in established areas can simply be absorbed and provided for by local government without significant disruption.

A regional approach to quantify and spatially understand future community infrastructure is an important first step to:

- optimise use and maximise access to community infrastructure - considering cross-border cooperation
- advocate for changes to funding models
- prioritise investment and the sequencing of infrastructure delivery, including future open space connectivity needs.

Priority 2: Enhance regional infrastructure initiatives

4: Community Infrastructure Needs Analysis - spatial analysis of impact of housing targets against community infrastructure provision benchmarks to address the likely gap over time, supported by a community infrastructure prioritisation tool. This would map the region's community infrastructure and develop GIS layers.

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029

5: Open Space Connectivity Strategy - to identify regional opportunities for open space connectivity, biodiversity and urban greening.

Strategic Priority 3 - Transform movement in the East

The eastern region is highly car dependent, with 79 per cent of trips made by car and only 7.3 per cent by public transport. With 59 per cent of households having two or more vehicles, projected growth would bring 330,000 more vehicles and congestion to the region. There is significant opportunity to reduce the number of short trips made by car and encourage more walking, cycling and public transport use.

Infrastructure Victoria research found that buses are a huge opportunity for Melbourne as the most cost-efficient public transport system which is true for the eastern region. Weaknesses and opportunities in the region's bus network are well documented and priority bus lanes, route extensions, increased frequency and other interventions are recommended.

Big build projects (LXR, SRL, NEL) are having a major impact on the region but are not place-making projects and our ability to influence is low. Safe and attractive walking and cycling routes and trails (including for e-bikes to counter distance and topography) to and within activity centres and corridors is a key objective of the ERG councils.

A *Sustainable and Integrated Transport Plan* is the necessary first step to transform movement in the east and to have more impact on how places transform. This would:

- synthesize and bring together the significant council work to date
- engage directly with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) and key stakeholders to strengthen collaboration across centres, along corridors and on major projects
- build the evidence base to support planning and advocacy.

Priority 3: Transform movement in the East initiative

6: Sustainable & Integrated Transport Plan - with DTP, bring together the significant work done in this area and share transport data to:

- agree on a prioritised, evidenced list for improvements to all modes (train, tram and bus) regarding route changes, service frequency changes, gaps and on-demand services
- agree on a prioritised, evidenced list for improvements to road infrastructure
- identify key corridors and their needs
- agree best practice principles for centres including greening and active transport
- update the Regional Trails Strategy considering the impact of North East Link and Suburban Rail Link and preferred commuter and local cycling routes
- establish consistent requirements for EV charging stations
- set up a sustainable mobility monitoring index.

Strategic Priority 4 - Support community safety

Communities in the eastern region are increasingly concerned about safety with crime statistics indicating double digit growth in crime rates for most ERG councils.

While Victoria Police is the key agency responsible for community safety, the draft *National Urban Policy* highlights several areas relevant to community safety, and that our 'urban areas are safe' when there is: Inclusivity and safety in public spaces; Safety for marginalised groups; Crime prevention; and Safety in movement.

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029

With an objective to: *Ensure community safety through policing, law enforcement and prevention activities*, the indicators¹ used by VicPol are:

- Community safety during the day and at night
- Community safety on public transport
- Crime statistics
- Number of road fatalities
- Number of road injuries.

Placemaking and well-maintained public spaces can play a part to discourage crime through measures such as adequate lighting, passive surveillance, and sightlines. Creating safe places must be central to the fast rollout of new housing.

Local government cannot address community safety issues alone. It can help to facilitate a place-based coordinated response between federal and state government and service agencies. A roundtable would assist in role clarity, information sharing, well targeted actions and clear communications to support improved community safety and perceptions of safety.

Priority 4: Support community safety initiatives

7: Community safety regional roundtable - bring community safety stakeholders together to share information, discuss collaborative actions, and establish a role and responsibility 'RASCI' to ensure role clarity and clear communications. The RASCI framework is: Responsible, Accountable, Supportive, Consulted or Informed.

Strategic Priority 5 - Develop local employment

Growing local businesses and local activities grows local employment.

Despite strong levels of employment self-containment in the eastern region, challenges remain for people with a disability, women over 45, culturally and linguistically diverse people, disengaged youth, and First Nations people in accessing employment.

The contribution of creative industries to the Victorian economy is growing year on year (\$40.5B in 2022-23) and utilises council infrastructure (galleries, museums, performing arts venues, libraries and the public realm). Festivals, events, public art and cultural programs build community and create local employment.

The ERG seeks to enhance cooperative economic development activities regionally. There is an opportunity to take a strategic approach to programming to make better use of regional infrastructure and support development pathways for artists and the region's creative industries. This should increase opportunities, leverage investments and reduce duplication.

Priority 5: Develop local employment initiatives

8: Foster co-operative economic development opportunities - identify and deliver short and longer-term opportunities for collaboration and shared activity.

9: Develop pathways for artists in the east - explore how artistic talent and the creative industries can be cultivated within the region.

¹ Source: 2023–24 Budget Paper No. 3 Service Delivery and [Victoria Police Corporate Plan 2022-2023: Priority area - Community safety](#)

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029

Actions summary: 2025 - 2029

#	Actions to support strategic priorities	Year				Partner	Project type				Alignment			
		1	2	3	4		JP: Joint Procurement SS: Shared Services IP: Integrated Planning Ad: Advocacy				People	Economy	Environment	Places
							JP	SS	IP	AD				
1	Shared Services Roadmap					LGV, MAV					✓	✓	✓	✓
2	IT Integration Vision										✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Shared Services/Joint Procurement Pilots										✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Community Infrastructure Needs Analysis					DTP/IV					✓			✓
5	Open Space Connectivity Strategy					SRV					✓		✓	✓
6	Sustainable & Integrated Transport Plan					DTP					✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Community safety regional roundtable					VicPol					✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Foster co-operative economic development opportunities										✓	✓		✓
9	Develop pathways for artists in the east										✓	✓		
ERG Governance, Operations and Advocacy														
10	Foster productive relationships with key stakeholders and facilitate sharing of best practice approaches to organisational development and service delivery.										✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Support regional responses to legislative and regulatory reviews impacting councils (P&E Act review)										✓	✓	✓	✓
12	As a single trusted voice on regionally significant matters, coordinate and support strategic and opportunistic advocacy to benefit ERG councils (e.g. longer council plan cycle; State election advocacy)										✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Deliver ERG meetings, CEO meetings, project support & communications (annual report, website & social media)										✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Council elections, Council Plan alignment and ERG Strategic Plan mid-term and full review										✓	✓	✓	✓

10.3 – ATTACHMENT 1. ERG Strategic Plan 2025-2029

■ ERG discrete project ■ Implementation / monitoring project outcomes ■ Ongoing / BAU activity

draft

10.4 Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus)

Attachment 1 Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus) -
for Council approval

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus) - for Council approval

WHITEHORSE CITY COUNCIL

STRATEGIC INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

2025 – 2027 (2025-26 Focus)



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TOGETHER WE MAKE IT HAPPEN

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus) - for Council approval**Table of Contents**

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10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus) - for Council approval



Approach

The Strategic Internal Audit Plan ("SIAP") was developed following consultation with the Whitehorse City Council ("WCC" or the "Council") executive management team, review of WCC's risk register and profile, and consideration of previous internal audit coverage.



Key officers consulted include:

- Simon McMillan, Chief Executive Officer;
- Stuart Cann, Director Corporate Services;
- Jeff Green, Director City Development;
- Lisa Letic, Director Community Services;
- Steven White, Director Infrastructure;
- Andrea Ghastine, Executive Manager Transformation;
- Vivien Ferlaine, Executive Manager Corporate Services;
- Celia Robinson, Manager Governance & Integrity;
- Melinda Federico, Coordinator Risk & Insurance; and

- Sajhneeta Singh, Coordinator Audit & Assurance.

This Draft SIAP was presented to WCC's Audit and Risk Committee ("ARC") members for review, discussion and approval purposes. The ARC is an independent advisory Committee of the Council overseeing audit, risk and governance related matters.

The Internal Audit Program focuses on areas considered higher risk to WCC to maximise the effectiveness of the internal audit function. Reviews have been categorised in the following areas:

- Governance;
- Financial Systems and Controls;
- People & Culture;
- Information Technology;
- Infrastructure and Asset Management;
- Departmental / Operational and Organisation-wide Audits; and
- Annual / Continuous reviews.

Each of the proposed reviews has been linked to the relevant risks contained in WCC's strategic risk register.

The plan will be reviewed at the end of each year and any other potential reviews may be selected based on changes to the organisational environment and strategic risk register at the time of review.

Internal Audit Reports

Internal audit reports will be presented to the ARC by the Partner and/or Director at relevant ARC meetings.

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus) - for Council approval



Proposed Audit Program (2025 – 2027)

Following consultation with WCC's executive management, the following Internal Audit reviews are proposed for the 2025 – 2027 years:

DESCRIPTION	2023-24 (HOURS)	2024-25 (HOURS)	2025-26 (HOURS)	2026-27 (HOURS)	Strategic Risk Reference	Linkage to Assurance Map (Page 18)
Governance						
Risk Management Framework (ISO 31000:2018) (incl. awareness survey)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			All risks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assurance Mapping	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				All risks	
Fraud and Corruption Control Framework (AS8001:2021) incl. awareness survey				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SR9; ER5; ER7; ER10; ER19	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Financial Systems and Controls						
Procurement and Tendering		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (In progress)			SR1; SR2; SR5; ER8227; ER5320; ER104	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Financial Controls – A/C Payable & A/C Receivable (incl. data analytics)				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SR1; SR2; SR5; ER1; ER5; ER14	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Payroll (incl. data analytics, interpretation and application of awards and allowance)			110		SR1; SR2; SR5; ER1; ER5; ER14	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Infrastructure and Asset Management						
IPS Asset Management System (Suitability & User Needs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				SR4; SR8	
Tree Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				SR3; SR8; ER1; ER6	

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DESCRIPTION	2023-24 (HOURS)	2024-25 (HOURS)	2025-26 (HOURS)	2026-27 (HOURS)	Strategic Risk Reference	Linkage to Assurance Map (Page 18)
Capital Works Program			130		SR1; SR2; SR8, SR11; ER1; ER6	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
People and Culture						
Human Resources Management				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SR7; ER3; ER10; ER18; ER19	
Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing (incl. awareness survey)			160		SR5; ER6; ER10; ER11; ER17; ER18; ER19; ER21	
Information Technology						
Data Governance / Cyber (Victorian Protective Data Security Standards) - Part 1: 23-24 year (sample from the 12 standards) - Part 2: 24-25 year (sample from the 12 standards)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			SR4; SR9; ER2; ER7; ER20	
ERP Implementation – Systems & Controls				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SR4; SR9; ER2; ER7; ER20	
Cyber (focus on training & awareness) incl. survey			80		SR4; SR9; ER2; ER7; ER20	
Departmental / Operational and Organisation-wide Audits						
Statutory Planning – Permit Approvals			110		SR5, SR6, SR8, SR11, ER7, ER12	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Contract Management				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SR1; SR2; SR5; ER1; ER5; ER14	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Climate Response Strategy 2023-2030 & associated Action Plan				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SR3; SR5; ER18	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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DESCRIPTION	2023-24 (HOURS)	2024-25 (HOURS)	2025-26 (HOURS)	2026-27 (HOURS)	Strategic Risk Reference	Linkage to Assurance Map (Page 18)
Business Continuity Planning, Disaster Recovery & Emergency Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				SR4; ER4	
Transformation Program (with specific focus on Benefits Realisation)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			SR4; SR5; ER2	
Customer Service – Complaints Management (External)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			SR8; ER12; ER21	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Annual / Continuous Reviews						
Follow Up Audit (Completed Actions Only) / Relevancy, Veracity & Effectiveness of Outstanding Actions		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	30	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	All risks	
Internal Audit Management						
Development / Administration of the Internal Audit Plan and monthly contract management meetings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	25	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Preparation for and attendance at ARC Meetings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	20	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Total Hours	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	665	TBC		
Total Cost (hours x \$128 excl. GST)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	\$85,120	TBC		

**** Please note the hours and reviews for the 26-27 year have not been committed. These will be subject to consideration of annual CPI rate increases, the Council's annual budget for internal audit and also the annual review process of the SIAP that will be undertaken in conjunction with Council management team. Further, the SIAP is subject to any changes through discussions with management and approval from the ARC during the course of the year should the need arise.**

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus) - for Council approval



Strategic and Enterprise Risk Register (April 2025)

Risk No.	Risk Description	Inherent Risk Rating Level	Revised / Residual Risk Rating Level
Strategic Risks			
SR1	Reduction and/or change in government funding priorities	High	High
SR2	Economic downturn impacting on Council's long term financial sustainability	High	High
SR3	Changes to climate impacting Council's ability to deliver services the community and manage Council assets in a restricted financial environment	High	High
SR4	Rapid pace of technological change impacting council's ability to be prepared to adapt and respond	High	High
SR5	Changes to regulations and legislation that impact Council operations	Medium	Medium
SR6	Changes to State Government land use and planning requirements	High	High
SR7	Workforce capability and capacity to deliver on organisational priorities	High	High
SR8	Future population growth impacting Council's ability to support the community needs and expectations	Medium	Medium
SR9	Unauthorised intrusion/access to Council's network	Extreme	High
SR11	Council assets are no longer meeting statutory requirements or community needs within a constrained financial environment	Extreme	High
Enterprise Risks			
ER1	Contractor engaged by Council to provide goods and services do not meet contract specification or requirements.	High	Medium
ER2	Benefits of Transformation not realised	High	Medium
ER3	Organisation change is not effectively implemented	Medium	Medium
ER4	Emergency event endangers or threatens people safety, property and significantly impacts critical services	Extreme	High
ER5	Fraudulent/corrupt behaviour by employees	High	Medium
ER6	Event occurs that threatens the health, safety and/or wellbeing of employees	Extreme	High
ER7	Unauthorised release of/amendment to/use of and/or loss of corporate confidential information	High	High

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Risk No.	Risk Description	Inherent Risk Rating Level	Revised / Residual Risk Rating Level
ER10	Misconduct/ Poor performance/unethical behaviour of employees	High	Medium
ER11	Child is exposed to harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation within the services and facilities managed or regulated by Council	High	Medium
ER12	Incorrect, incomplete or untimely information provided to the community	High	Medium
ER13	Disruption to internet and/or critical business systems for a period in excess of 30 minutes	Extreme	High
ER14	Unauthorised person accessing/entering Council building.	High	Medium
ER17	Volunteer undertaking activities on behalf of Council is injured or their actions cause harm/injury or damage/loss to Council and/or private property	High	High
ER18	Council does not identify/respond and/or provide suitable assistance to employee/s exposed to psychologically harmful events/environments.	High	Medium
ER19	Misconduct or Unethical behaviour of Councillors	High	Low
ER20	Use of generative AI information that has misleading or harmful content and breach of copyright laws.	Medium	Medium
ER21	Employee/s assaulted (verbally/physically) by a member of the public whilst conducting operations	Medium	Medium

WCC Risk Rating Matrix:

Risk	Risk Rating
	Extreme
	High
	Medium
	Low

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus) - for Council approval



High Level Scopes for Proposed 2025-2026 Internal Audit Reviews

Description	Commencement Date	Hours
<p>Cyber (focus on Training and Awareness) incl. survey</p> <p>Cyber risk primarily relates to the threats by means of attacks, breaches or incidents that are targeted at an organisation's reliable functioning of critical infrastructure. Cyber security threats exploit the increased complexity and connectivity of critical infrastructure systems and has the potential to place an organisation's security, economy, and public safety at risk. Similar to financial and reputational risk, cyber security risk can affect organisation's bottom line. It can drive up costs and impact revenue. Hence, it is important that the WCC has robust systems, processes, and controls in place with respect to cyber security to prevent such anomalies from occurring and to ensure that in the event such anomalies happen, that WCC has appropriate incident response and investigation/follow-up processes in place.</p> <p>The objective of the review will be to assess the adequacy and efficiency of cyber security training and awareness programs and initiatives implemented across WCC. More specifically, to assess whether awareness is created amongst staff members regarding IT and cyber security by providing relevant trainings (both at induction and periodic / refresher training and awareness programs).</p> <p><i>We will also conduct a cyber awareness survey across the organisation to assess whether there is appropriate staff awareness of cyber security requirements and responsibilities.</i></p>	August 2025	80
<p>Capital Works Program</p> <p>Effectively managing capital works requires a comprehensive framework of activities (i.e. project initiation, planning, execution and review) to achieve predetermined capital works objectives. It also ensures that those capital works essential for continuing services are developed and constructed at a level consistent with pre-defined requirements and council's strategic and asset plan(s). It is imperative that capital works projects are initiated, prioritised and delivered appropriately to ensuring maximum value from council's investment in capital assets.</p> <p>Accordingly, the objectives of this review are to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process through which candidate capital works projects are initiated and assessed is comprehensive including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A clear and formal process for identifying potential projects, and the utilisation of criteria to determine which projects go through to the next phase; – The establishment and use of formal criteria to prioritise projects; – Alignment with Council's current overall and capital objectives; 	September 2025	130

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Description	Commencement Date	Hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Compliance with the criteria when prioritising projects in practice; and – Periodic evaluation of criteria to ensure the most appropriate projects are approved, and that criteria remains consistent with council objectives/priorities over time. • The quality of information being used to identify and rank / prioritise candidate projects, and the format by which it is presented, under the capital works program is appropriate; • Capital works projects are ranked and approved consistent with the prioritisation process; • Formal justification where projects are not ranked / approved / completed in line with priority ranking; • For externally initiated projects, the process for advising stakeholders on the status of their request for works, both initially and over time is efficient and effective; and • That projects are funded, managed and delivered appropriately. 		
<p>Payroll (incl. Data Analytics, interpretation and application of Awards and Allowances)</p> <p>Comprehensive policies and procedures with adequate levels of internal control are a core ingredient for an effective payroll function. Accordingly, systematic and structured processes should be in place to ensure that Council has adequate visibility over accountability, probity, value for money and the management of risk.</p> <p>The objectives of the review will be to assess the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures supporting the payroll function; • Additions, deletion and changes to payroll Masterfile data; • Calculation, payment and accounting for payroll runs; • Authorisation of large or unusual payment; • Adequate interpretation and application of awards and allowances; • Provisions for employee entitlements; • Reconciliation processes; and • Segregation of duties. 	November 2025	110

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Description	Commencement Date	Hours
<i>This review will consist of a data analytics exercise to provide assurance over the completeness and accuracy of relevant data (Payroll). All data contained in the Employee Masterfile will be reviewed. Transactional date will be tested for a 12-month period.</i>		
<p>Statutory Planning – Permit Approvals</p> <p>Planning schemes and planning permits are the major legislative mechanisms for controlling land use and development. Planning schemes are statutory documents that set out the objectives, policies and provisions for the use and development of land in the area to which they apply. Where a planning scheme requires it, a planning permit must be obtained to use or develop land for certain purposes. The <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> and Regulations establish the timeframes and procedures to be followed by Council in processing planning permit applications and amending planning schemes. Accordingly, it is imperative that strong governance is provided to ensure this function is delivered efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>The objectives of this review will be to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of statutory planning permit approval processes and controls. More specifically, we will assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the requisite policies and procedures are in place, including adequate quality assurance arrangements to align council-level decisions with the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>, the State Planning Policy Framework and HCC's Planning Scheme; • The processing of planning permit applications complies with the Act and with HCC's Planning Scheme; and • The process and method for providing sufficient and accurate information to permit applicants is sufficient and accurate in line with the Act. 	February 2026	110
<p>Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing (incl. awareness survey)</p> <p>In Victoria, Occupational Health and Safety ("OH&S") is governed by a system of laws, regulations and compliance codes which set out the responsibilities of employers and workers to ensure that safety is maintained at work. The <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i> (the "Act") is the cornerstone of legislative and administrative measures to improve WS&W in Victoria. The Act specifies that an employer must provide a safe and healthy workplace for workers and contractors including adequate facilities, information, training and supervision according to OH&S legislation. The employer must also ensure that other people (such as customers, visitors and the general public) are not endangered by the conduct of business. Similarly, all workers have a duty of care to ensure that they work in a manner that is not harmful to their own health and safety and that of others. The mismanagement of workforce safety and wellbeing can have a number of legislative, legal, compliance, reputational, workforce planning and institutional implications for WCC.</p> <p>As organisations navigated through the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, certain risks relating to OH&S and wellbeing have also arisen and/or increased (e.g. contracting COVID-19 virus, stress management, mental health and wellbeing, vaccination requirements, hybrid</p>	May 2026	160

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Description	Commencement Date	Hours
<p>working arrangements etc.) and as such it is important that organisations have strategies and processes in place to reshape and take into consideration shifts in these aspects from an OH&S and wellbeing perspective and how this will impact organisations going forward.</p> <p>Further, the Victorian Government has announced new psychosocial hazard legislation (covering bullying, workplace stress, etc.) expected to be introduced in October 2025, with enforcement beginning December 2025. WCC will need to uplift its practices in light of these new obligations.</p> <p>The primary objective of this review will be to assess the internal control environment relating to OH&S (incl. wellbeing) management at WCC against relevant sections of the Act and the AS45001:2018 - Occupational health and safety management systems (which reflect Act requirements), the new psychosocial legislations, and any other relevant mandates. More specifically, the following will be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy and appropriateness of WCC's policies, procedures, delegation arrangements, approval processes and systems for management of OH&S (incl. wellbeing); • Assessment of whether policies and procedures have been established to ensure compliance with relevant sections of the OH&S Act (e.g. Sections 22, 21A, and 43), new psychosocial legislation and other legislative requirements for OH&S (incl. wellbeing) management in Victoria; • The appropriateness of WCC's risk assessment in terms of identifying and addressing OH&S and wellbeing matters (i.e. stress, bullying, sexual harassment, staff engagement, dealing with abusive members of the public, dealing with aggressive behaviour within the organisation, access to the Employee Assistance Program ("EAP"), discrimination, incident reporting practices, workplace inspection processes, evacuation drill exercises, contractor and consultant induction processes, insurance cover, etc.); • Processes in place with respect to the retention of adequate staff and other records pertinent to OH&S (incl. wellbeing) matters, which includes communication between staff members, internal and external key stakeholders; and • Assessment of monitoring and reporting mechanisms to management and the relevant Committee with respect to OH&S (incl. wellbeing) related matters. <p><i>We will also conduct a OH&S and wellbeing awareness survey across the organisation to assess whether there is appropriate staff awareness of workforce safety and wellbeing requirements and responsibilities.</i></p>		

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus) - for Council approval

Description	Commencement Date	Hours
<p>Follow-up (Completed Actions Only)</p> <p>Internal audit is a vital resource for an organisation in providing assurance that key areas of the organisation are operating appropriately, in identifying any weaknesses or deficiencies in operations, and in providing assistance to the organisation in addressing these issues through the provision of value-added recommendations.</p> <p>In order to maximise the effectiveness of the audit process, it is important that the status of actions contained in management responses to internal audit recommendations are monitored by management and the ARC. This will ensure that they are implemented appropriately and in a timely manner.</p> <p>The objective of this review will be to assess the actions reported as “completed” by the WCC to the ARC for a specified period. This will provide assurance to the management and ARC that recommendations contained in the internal audit reports were adequately implemented and reported.</p> <p><i>The review will only focus on findings / observations from previous reports that are rated as High Risk and/or Medium only. The previous internal audit reviews will be discussed and agreed in conjunction with WCC management.</i></p>	June 2026	30

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Audit Universe – 2015-2027

DESCRIPTION	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Governance												
Corporate Governance							☑					
Delegations					☑							
Fraud & Corruption Management & Prevention			☑									
Privacy and Data Protection Act Management				☑								
Assurance Mapping									☑			
Risk Management (ISO 31000:2018)										☑		
Financial Systems and Controls												
Rates Management (incl. rates debtors)						☑						
Payroll			☑									
Procurement and Tendering										☑		
Cash Receipting	☑		☑									
Financial Transactions	☑											
Credit Cards				☑								

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DESCRIPTION	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Sundry Debtors		☑										
Infrastructure and Asset Management												
Asset (Infrastructure) Management				☑				☑				
Buildings Maintenance (General)		☑										
IPS Asset Management System (Suitability & User Needs)									☑			
City Works	☑											
Fleet Management				☑								
Tree Management									☑			
Statutory Planning		☑										
Statutory Building								☑				
People and Culture												
-												
Information Technology												
Business Continuity Planning & Emergency Management					☑				☑			

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DESCRIPTION	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
IT Disaster Recovery Planning		☑										
IT E-Commerce					☑							
IT Essential 8 Maturity Assessment							☑					
IT Security and Access Controls				☑								
Data Governance / Cyber (Victorian Protective Data Security Standards) – Part 1 and/or Part 2									☑	☑		
Departmental/Operational and Organisation-wide Audits												
Food Management Act						☑						
Health Act Management						☑						
Child Safety Standards						☑						
Complaints Management		☑								☑		
Contract Management					☑							
Fuel Cards			☑									
Grants (community grants provided by Council)	☑											
Immunisation Management					☑							

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DESCRIPTION	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Landfill Rehabilitation			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>									
Leases and Licenses								<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Local Laws Enforcement					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>							
Maternal and Child Health								<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Non-Grant COVID relief packages							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Occupational Health and Safety - Staff			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
OHS - Contractors			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Procurement Practices – under tender threshold			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>									
Project Governance – Digital Transformation (post implementation)							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Project Governance – Digital Transformation Post Implementation							<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Project Management						<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>						
Project Management – Whitehorse Performing Arts Centre (WPAC)								<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Records Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>											

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DESCRIPTION	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Road Management Plan							☑					
Services Review process							☑					
Tendering Processes				☑								
Transformation Program (with specific focus on Benefits Realisation)										☑		
Volunteer Management						☑						
Annual/Continuous Reviews												
Follow up of recommendations				☑	☑	☑	☑			☑		
Internal Audit Plan Update			☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑		

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus) - for Council approval



Potential Future Internal Audits Identified during the Assurance Map Exercise (April 2024)

Sub Service Area / Category	Comments and Potential Audits
<u>Governance & Integrity</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two internal audits has been undertaken for Governance and Integrity in the last 3 years. Potential future audits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Fraud and Corruption Control Framework; Review of Legislative Compliance; Review of Managing Conflicts-of-Interests; Review of Freedom of Information; Review of Records Management; and Review of Councillor Expenses.
<u>Corporate Planning & Performance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No internal audits conducted within the past 3 years covering off on Corporate Planning and Performance Potential future reviews include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Performance Reporting (incl LGPRF compliance). Review of Legislative Compliance.
<u>Engineering & Investment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 1 internal audit has been conducted over the past 3 years covering off on Engineering and Investment Potential reviews that Council may want to take into consideration may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Investment Management.
<u>Finance</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two internal audits have been undertaken for Finance in the last 3 years. Potential future audits identified in Council's current Strategic IA Plan include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Contract Management; Review of Financial Controls – A/c Payable & A/C Receivables Review of Payroll Other potential future audits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Cash Handling Procedures. Review of Credit Cards Review of Budget Development and Management Review of Financial Planning
<u>Engineering & Investment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 1 internal audit has been conducted over the past 3 years covering off on Engineering and Investment Potential reviews that Council may want to take into consideration may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Capital Works Program (currently sitting in Strategic IA Plan in future years audits)
<u>Parks & Environment</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only 1 audit has been undertaken in this space. Potential future audits that can be considered include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces; Review of Environment Management; Review of Community Facilities; Review of Landfills.

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus) - for Council approval



Sub Service Area / Category	Comments and Potential Audits
<u>Community Safety:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 internal audit have been conducted over the past 3 years covering off on Community Safety. Potential reviews that Council may want to take into consideration may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Community Facilities; Review of Parking Infringement Management.; Review of Local Laws; Review of Domestic Animal Management.
<u>City Planning & Development</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only one audit has been conducted over the past 3 years covering off on City Planning and Development Potential future audits identified in Council's current Strategic IA Plan include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Statutory Planning. Potential reviews that Council may want to take into consideration may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Developer Contributions Framework; Review of Public Open Space Contributions Framework; and
<u>City Services</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only one internal audit has been conducted over the past 3 years covering off City Services. Potential future audits identified in Council's current Strategic IA Plan include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of the Effectiveness of the Climate Response Strategy 2023 – 2030 and associated action plans. Other future audits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Environment Management; Review of Waste Management; Review of Landfills; and Review of Fleet Management.
<u>Strategic Communications & Customer Service</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 internal audit has been undertaken for strategic communications and customer service in the last 3 years. Other potential internal audits for consideration include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Stakeholder Engagement. Review of Social Media
<u>Arts & Cultural Services</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No internal audits conducted within the past 3 years covering off on Arts & Cultural Development Potential future reviews include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Community Facilities; and Review of Events Management.
<u>Leisure & Recreation Services:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No internal audits conducted within the past 3 years covering off on Leisure and Recreation Services. Potential future reviews include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Leisure Centres; Review of Community Facilities; Review of Public Open Space Contributions Framework.

10.4 – ATTACHMENT 1. Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2025-27 (2025-26 Focus) - for Council approval**Other Potential Future Audit Areas**

Audit Areas	
Incident Reporting Management	Workforce Planning and Development (incl. Succession Planning)
Continuous Improvement Program	Indirect Taxes
Legal Advice	Road Management Plan Compliance
Project Management	Grants Management
Managing and reporting sexual harassment	Legislative Compliance
Child Safe Standards	Volunteer Management
Management of Events	Fleet Management
Stakeholder Engagement and Management	Social Media
Budget Development and Management	Community Facilities
Privacy (Personal and Sensitive Information) (incl. Artificial Intelligence)	Councillor Expenses
Gender Equality Practices (incl. awareness survey)	Environmental, Social & Governance
Immunisation Services	Aquatic & Leisure Services
Conflict of Interest	Leases and Licences
Closed Landfills	Open Parks and Spaces

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The image shows a teal background with a diagonal split between a darker and a lighter shade. In the center, the HLB Mann Judd logo is displayed, consisting of a white circle containing the letters 'HLB' in bold, followed by 'MANN JUDD' in a larger, bold, sans-serif font, and 'ADVISORY AND ACCOUNTING' in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font below it.

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TOGETHER WE MAKE IT HAPPEN

10.5 Councillor Internal Resolution Procedure

Attachment 1 Draft Whitehorse Internal Resolution Process



COUNCILLOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

Purpose

This Procedure will be observed when dealing with alleged breaches of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

Legislative Requirements

This Internal Resolution Procedure (**Procedure**) is adopted under and in accordance with section 140 of the *Local Government Act 2020 (Act)* and regulation 12A of the Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020.

Internal Resolution Procedure

Disputes between Councillors may arise in a variety of circumstances. This Procedure is to apply to those disputes in which one Councillor (**the Complainant**) alleges that another Councillor (**the Respondent**) has breached the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

This Procedure provides both parties to a dispute with support and encouragement to resolve the dispute in a manner that enables the Councillors to move forward and maintain effective working relationships.

This Procedure is designed to minimise cost and disruption of disputes to Council and individual Councillors and, where possible, avoid disputes escalating and becoming the subject of an internal arbitration.

It is acknowledged that this Procedure will not be suitable for resolution of all disputes between Councillors.

An overview of the Procedure is annexed, in the form of a flowchart.

There are two stages to the Internal Resolution Procedure:

First Stage	1. Discussion
Second Stage	2. Conciliation



First Stage - Discussion

A Complainant is encouraged to raise their issue directly with the Respondent in a respectful and courteous manner, either in person or in writing, where they feel comfortable to do so.

Councillors are encouraged to recognise that:

- (a) certain behaviours and communications may be perceived by others to be causing issues or offence that may not have been intended;
- (b) it can provide useful insight to reflect on their own behaviour or motivation and possible contribution to the dispute, whether intended or not; and
- (c) dealing with the dispute early is more likely to avoid the issue escalating and resolve it before it threatens the effective operation of Council.

It is useful to frame any issue from the Councillor's perspective (e.g. "I felt disrespected when you said / did ..."), rather than accusing another person of holding a particular position or taking a negative action deliberately. A Councillor should let the other Councillor know how they feel and ask for an explanation, rather than making accusations or assumptions.

Second Stage - Conciliation –

Where a direct conversation between Councillors has not been successful in resolving the dispute, or a Councillor does not feel comfortable communicating directly with another Councillor, the second stage of this Procedure is conciliation.

Initiating conciliation

A Complainant initiating conciliation must notify the Mayor and the Respondent of the dispute by completing a **Conciliation Application Form**. That form (see Attachment 1 to this Procedure) must:

- (a) specify the names of the Complainant and Respondent;
- (b) specify the provision (or provisions) of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct alleged to have been breached;
- (c) detail what was said or done by the Respondent to constitute a breach of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct;

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- (d) attach any supporting information to provide examples of the behaviour complained of (e.g. screenshots or emails); and
- (e) be dated and signed by the Complainant.

Participating in conciliation

Councillors are not obliged to engage in conciliation but should only decline to participate if they honestly and reasonably believe that their participation would adversely affect their health or wellbeing or would otherwise be unsafe.

A Respondent declining to participate in the conciliation must advise the Complainant and the Mayor of their unwillingness to participate, and the reasons for it. That advice must be provided no more than one week after receiving the Conciliation Application Form.

Conduct of conciliation

Conciliation is to be conducted by the Mayor except when the Mayor is a party to the dispute or otherwise unavailable to conduct conciliation. In that case the Deputy Mayor will assume the role of the Mayor in the conciliation process. If both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor are parties to the dispute or otherwise unavailable to conduct the conciliation, the role of the Mayor must be performed by a Councillor jointly chosen for the purpose by the parties.

When, in this Procedure, reference is made to the Mayor it includes:

- (a) the Deputy Mayor; and
- (b) a Councillor jointly chosen for the purpose by the parties, when the Mayor and/or the Deputy Mayor are parties to the dispute or otherwise unavailable to conduct a conciliation.

Roles and responsibilities

The role of the Mayor is to provide guidance to the parties to the dispute about the Standards of Conduct in the Model Councillor Code of Conduct, and actively explore whether the dispute can be resolved by agreement between them.

Upon receipt of the request for conciliation, the Mayor supported by the Councillor Conduct officer will make an initial assessment to determine if the matters raised warrant conciliation (i.e. issues raised are not frivolous, vexatious, misconceived or lacking in substance).

The Mayor's decision following the initial assessment will be provided in writing to the complainant who lodged the request. The Mayor will make this decision in the

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context that their position is expected to foster positive relationships between councillors and take the lead in addressing poor councillor conduct when it arises.

The role of the Complainant and Respondent is to explain their respective positions and, in a show of goodwill, actively explore the possibility of resolving the dispute by agreement.

All Councillors are responsible for conducting themselves in a courteous and respectful manner at all times during the conciliation.

The role of the Councillor Conduct Officer is to provide the Mayor with the administrative support necessary to arrange and conduct the conciliation.

Support from Council

Council, through the Councillor Conduct Officer, will provide administrative assistance to the Mayor when arranging a time and place for conciliation, including any technical assistance that may be required. Council will make a venue available to the Councillors within Council's offices that is private and suited to the conciliation process.

Council will not provide any substantive guidance or advice about the subject matter of the dispute, or pay the costs of legal advice or representation for any Councillor in connection with this Procedure. Parties to a dispute may seek their own legal or other advice at their own cost, if they choose to do so.

End or termination of conciliation

Conciliation will end or be terminated if any of the following occurs:

- (a) the parties cannot jointly choose a Councillor to conduct the conciliation within one week of being asked to do so;
- (b) the Respondent notifies the Mayor that they do not wish to participate in conciliation, and the reasons for it, within one week of receiving the Conciliation Application Form;
- (c) the Respondent does not respond to the Conciliation Application Form at all within two weeks of receiving it;
- (d) conciliation has not occurred within four weeks of the Complainant submitting the Conciliation Application Form;
- (e) conciliation has occurred and the parties have been unable to resolve the dispute; or
- (f) the dispute has been resolved.

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The time for conciliation may be extended by agreement between the parties to the dispute, whether or not the matter has been escalated to one of the formal dispute resolution procedures outlined in the Act.

Confidentiality

Parties and other participants are expected to maintain confidentiality concerning the dispute and the operation of this Procedure.

Record of outcome

The Mayor must document any agreement that is reached between the Complainant and Respondent. The agreement must be signed by the Complainant, Respondent and Mayor. Copies must be provided to the Complainant and Respondent, and the original must be retained by the Mayor. Again, parties and the Mayor are expected to maintain the confidentiality of the agreement reached.

Internal Resolution Procedure does not Apply in these Circumstances

The following disputes are not covered by this Procedure:

- (a) differences between Councillors in relation to policy or decision making, which are appropriately resolved through discussion and voting in Council meetings;
- (b) complaints made against a Councillor or Councillors by a member or members of Council staff, or by any other external person;
- (c) allegations of sexual harassment;
- (d) disclosures made about a Councillor under the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012*, which can only be made to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission; and
- (e) allegations of criminal misconduct, which should be immediately referred to Victoria Police or the relevant integrity authority.

Formal Dispute Resolution Procedure

This Procedure operates alongside, and does not replace, the formal dispute resolution procedures outlined in the Act.

The formal dispute resolution procedure applies to misconduct, serious misconduct and gross misconduct.

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Section 141 of the Act provides for an internal arbitration process concerning a breach of the Standards of Conduct set out in the Model Councillor Code of Conduct.

REVIEW

Date Adopted		
Department	Governance and Integrity	
Review History	New Requirement	
Next Review Date		
Reference		
Related legislation	Related policies	
<i>Local Government Act 2020</i> <i>Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020</i> <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i>	<i>Councillor Model Code of Conduct</i> <i>Council Expenses Policy</i> <i>Gift Benefits and Hospitality Policy</i> <i>Public Transparency Policy</i> <i>Social Media Guide for Councillors</i> <i>Whitehorse Governance Rules 2020</i>	

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Conciliation Application Form

Complainant:	
Respondent:	
Provisions of Model Councillor Code of Conduct breached:	
Action constituting breach:	
(Include dates, times and detailed descriptions of the action complained of. Attach further documents as necessary.)	

Signed by)

)

)

on)

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Annexure

INTERNAL RESOLUTION PROCEDURE FLOWCHART

