

## Community Health Services Campaign Advisory Committee



<b>Date</b>	Thursday 12 March, 2026
<b>Time</b>	6.00pm – 7.00pm
<b>Location</b>	Richmond Town Hall, Councillors Room
<b>Chair</b>	Cr. Sarah McKenzie
<b>Minute taker</b>	Danielle Clarke
<b>Content Manager Reference</b>	D26/129877

**Statement of Recognition of Wurundjeri Land**

Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

**Attendees**

<b>Councillor/s</b>	Cr. Sarah McKenzie, Cr. Sophie Wade, Cr. Kenneth Gomez
<b>Committee members</b>	Heather Hindle, Glenda Scalise, Elizabeth Gherardin, Natalie Savin, Mike Naismith
<b>Council Officers</b>	Malcolm McCall (Manager Ageing, Equity & Community Development) Danielle Clarke (Senior Planner Community Health & Safety)
<b>Guests</b>	N/A
<b>Apologies</b>	Mayor, Cr. Stephen Jolly, Dr. Anita Munoz, Robyn Williams, Chris Dite

Item number	Item title or subject	Minute notes
1.	Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country	Cr. McKenzie acknowledged Country, welcomed Councillors and Committee members, and noted apologies. Committee members introduced themselves, including their background and connection to the issue.
2.	Advisory Committee Governance	<p>An overview of the item was provided by a Council officer, outlining the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee is a time-limited advisory body established by Council to support a community campaign relating to community health services currently delivered by cohealth.</li> <li>• Council's role is to work collaboratively with the Committee, to listen to members and consider identified issues, opportunities and challenges.</li> <li>• Council officers will work within Council's remit to identify appropriate pathways to advocate for community outcomes.</li> <li>• The Committee's role is to consider key issues and provide advice to inform Council's advocacy in relation to community health.</li> <li>• It was noted that the Committee does not make decisions or set policy, and does not direct Council resources beyond those approved by Council resolution.</li> <li>• Council encourages respectful discussion and open dialogue, ensuring all views are heard.</li> <li>• Council officers provide secretariat support, including minute taking and coordination of actions.</li> </ul>

		<p>An update was provided on the Independent Review of cohealth General Practice and Related Services, noting that the review report is to be provided to the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments and cohealth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The scope of the Independent Review was outlined, consistent with the Review’s Terms of Reference (attached with the minutes).</li> <li>• It was noted that Council has provided a submission to the Independent Review, which was presented to Council at the 10 February 2026 meeting and is attached to the minutes.</li> <li>• It was noted that the full review report is not expected to be publicly released and will be provided to the relevant Commonwealth and Victorian Ministers for Health.</li> <li>• It is understood that the Independent Review Panel was granted a time extension, with the original end of February timeframe extended to mid-March 2026.</li> </ul> <p><b>Matters raised by the committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification was sought regarding Councillor representation and Committee membership.</li> <li>• It was noted that an Expression of Interest process was undertaken to appoint community members, resulting in eight Committee members.</li> <li>• It was further noted that Mayor Cr. Stephen Jolly and Cr. Sarah McKenzie were appointed members of the Committee, and that and Cr. Kenneth Gomez and Cr. Sophie Wade attend in an observer capacity.</li> <li>• Cr. Sarah McKenzie chaired this meeting in the absence of the Mayor.</li> </ul> <p>(Please note: Subsequent to this meeting, it has been determined that Mayor Cr. Stephen Jolly and Cr. Sophie Wade will share the role of Chair for future meetings.</p> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council officers to circulate Council’s submission to the Independent Review of cohealth General Practice and Related Services with the minutes that was presented to Council at its 10 February 2026 meeting.</li> </ul>
3.	Context setting – Current policy review and context	<p>An overview of the item was provided by a Council officer, outlining the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A recap of events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mid-October 2025 – cohealth announced the cessation of GP and counselling services at the Fitzroy, Collingwood and Kensington sites.</li> <li>○ 24 October 2025 – Council convened a community meeting at Fitzroy Town Hall.</li> <li>○ 11 November 2025 – Council considered the matter and resolved to advocate for an Independent Review.</li> <li>○ 20 November 2025 – the Commonwealth Government announced interim funding to maintain services until 31 July 2026.</li> <li>○ 16 December 2025 – Council resolved to establish this Advisory Committee.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ January 2026 – Council lodged a submission to the Independent Review (attached with the minutes).</li> <li>○ 20 February 2026 – the Mayor and Council CEO participated in interviews with the Independent Review Panel.</li> <li>● An overview of the Independent Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Review Panel comprises Professor Stephen Duckett (Chair), Professor John Furler and Ms. Jane Seeber.</li> <li>○ The Review has examined governance, financial management and operating models, and has undertaken stakeholder consultation.</li> <li>○ It is understood that the Review Panel was granted a short extension, with the final report expected in mid-March 2026.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Matters raised by the committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The committee discussed the scope of the Independent Review and opportunities for strategic advocacy.</li> <li>● A Council officer advised that under the Independent Review’s Terms of Reference, consultation is limited to the review process and does not extend to the findings of the final report.</li> <li>● A Council officer advised that once the Independent Review report is provided to the cohealth Board and the relevant Commonwealth and Victorian Ministers, there will be a period of consideration before any determination is made. The Council Officer also advised that this period was a potential window for strategic advocacy.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Council officer to provide notes on Independent Review and Council advocacy and involvement with Minutes.</li> </ul>
4.	Committee priorities and next steps	<p><b>Matters raised by the committee</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Committee discussed these matters, including the importance of maintaining access to community health services in Yarra, particularly for community members with complex needs or who are under-resourced and rely on these services for ongoing, integrated care.</li> <li>● A committee member put forward a number of potential priority areas for discussion, including matters relating to the future of the Collingwood site, organisational arrangements at cohealth, and community engagement.</li> <li>● A Council officer advised that where the Committee wishes to recommend advocacy positions beyond Council’s current adopted position, these matters may be raised with Council through Delegate Reports (Item 11 on the Council meeting agenda) for consideration, and a resolution may be moved.</li> <li>● A Councillor suggested that the Mayor seek a meeting with the state Minister for Health.</li> <li>● The Committee discussed the development of priority advocacy actions for further workshop and refinement.</li> <li>● A Council officer suggested scheduling a further meeting ahead of the Council meeting on 14 April 2026.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Committee members to submit any proposed advocacy items or information ahead of the next meeting.</li> <li>● Council officers to</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ circulate committee member proposals on priority areas with the minutes.</li> <li>○ provide the Committee secretariat email for out-of-session submissions on priorities and positions.</li> <li>○ collate and prepare material ahead of the next meeting.</li> <li>○ confirm the date of the next meeting with Committee members.</li> </ul>
Other Business		The timing of the next meeting was discussed, with the date and location to be confirmed.
Meeting closed		The meeting closed at 7.15pm
Next scheduled meeting		TBC