

Minutes

Community Health Services Campaign Advisory Committee



Date	Tuesday 7 April, 2026
Time	6.00 pm – 7.30 pm
Location	Collingwood Town Hall, Wurundjeri Room
Chair	Mayor, Cr. Stephen Jolly
Minute taker	Tara Bewley
Content Manager Reference	D26/156076

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

Councillor/s	Mayor, Cr Stephen Jolly, Cr. Sophie Wade
Committee members	Natalie Savin, Mike Naismith, Chris Dite, Elizabeth Gherardin, Dr Anita Munoz, Heather Hindle and Glenda Scalise.
Council Officers	Malcolm McCall (Manager Ageing, Equity & Community Development), Tara Bewley (Senior Policy Advisor), and Gaye Stewart (Policy Advisor).
Guests	Brooke Colbert (General Manager, Community Strengthening).
Apologies	Robyn Williams, Cr Sarah McKenzie (guest), Cr Kenneth Gomez (guest).

Item number	Item title or subject	Minute notes
1.	Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country	Mayor Cr. Jolly acknowledged Country. Committee members introduced themselves, including their background and connection to the issue.
2.	Declarations of conflict of interest	No conflicts of interest were declared.
3.	Governance	No issues were raised for the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation of Terms of Reference Advisory role of the Committee Pathway to Council (Delegate Reports – Item 11)
4.	Confirmation of previous minutes and actions	Minutes were adopted; no issues were raised with actions.
5.	Context update – Independent Review	An overview of the item was provided by Mayor Cr Stephen Jolly, noting that the findings of the Independent Review, originally expected in February, had been submitted to the interested parties (Victorian and Commonwealth Ministers and cohealth) in March. The following matters were discussed, noting that some were general observations in nature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> members highlighted the advantages of the current Collingwood location and emphasised the importance of advocating for

		<p>retention of the site and existing service model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> members also acknowledged the broader pressures on primary healthcare arising from current funding settings <p>The following potential options were also discussed, noting that these were speculative and exploratory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential for the Collingwood cohealth site to be relocated to the Collingwood Housing Estate, including the use of prefabricated buildings as an interim measure It was suggested that, if the site were to be retained for community health purposes, State ownership would be preferable to continued ownership by cohealth it was noted that the Commonwealth Government may consider piloting alternative primary care funding models, such as capitated or block funding, better to support integrated care for people with complex needs; members expressed differing views and noted that further information would be required <p>The Mayor noted that, in the event of a positive outcome, a non-alcoholic celebration could be held to acknowledge the development. He also noted that, if the outcome were less favourable, a more subdued gathering may be appropriate to regroup and consider next steps.</p>
<p>Priority advocacy items</p>		<p>The Mayor proposed convening an emergency Committee meeting once the relevant Ministers' determination is announced, noting that the Independent Review report will be provided to the relevant Health Ministers and that only a high-level summary is likely to be published. This was supported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members agreed that action may be required prior to the next scheduled Committee meeting. The potential for a large community gathering or rally was raised. However, it was also noted that the October meeting was effective because it had a clear purpose: demonstrating to governments and cohealth that the community would not passively accept the proposed service changes. Members noted that the interim funding and the commitment to an Independent Review could credibly be regarded as influenced by that advocacy. It was raised that Mayor Cr Jolly should seek a meeting with the Victorian Minister for Health. The Mayor noted that other Council representatives had previously met with the Minister's office and that he had also written to the Minister. Members emphasised the importance of establishing a clear Committee position to communicate to the community and relevant Ministers. It was noted that the Local Government Act 2020 and Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan support Council's advocacy role. It was also noted that, while this is factually correct, it may not in itself be the most effective strategic advocacy lever; however, the Plan's health profile findings and strategic objectives have informed Council's submission and related advocacy. Council officers advised that a list of bulk-billed services had been developed in 2025 in response to a request to map local GP service availability. It was noted that this information can be shared on request but has not been broadly circulated, as the current capacity of individual clinics has not been verified. It was noted that Commonwealth funding of \$24.3 million is supporting three new bulk-billing GP clinics in the ACT and

		<p>securing the future of Interchange Health Co-op at Tuggeranong Family Medical Centre through a transition to a new provider. This was raised as a comparison point in discussing the relatively limited interim funding provided to cohealth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion also included whether urgent care clinics represent the optimal investment to sustain community-based primary care and reduce avoidable demand on tertiary services. • Members noted that future advocacy could draw on lived examples of patient experience to build broader public understanding and support. • It was also noted that the Federal Budget may present a further advocacy opportunity. <p>Mayor Cr Stephen Jolly suggested that an urgent business motion be brought forward at the Council meeting on Tuesday, 14 April 2026. Mayor Cr Jolly left the meeting at approximately 7.00 pm, and Cr Sophie Wade assumed the Chair.</p> <p>The Committee discussed and supported the inclusion of the following matters in the proposed motion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commencement of a public advocacy campaign directed to the State and Federal Governments if no action is announced by 21 April 2026 • A focus on preventing the sale of the Collingwood site and maintaining GP and allied health services across Fitzroy, Collingwood and Kensington • A request that the Mayor seek a meeting with the Minister for Health and the Treasurer, together with a Committee delegation • A staged approach, with the motion as the first step and further actions, such as digital advocacy and stakeholder engagement, to be considered depending on the response <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Committee member to prepare a draft motion and circulate it to Cr Wade and Committee members on the evening of 7 April 2026 • Cr Wade to provide the draft motion to Governance • Council officers to share the list of bulk-billed services within or proximate to the City of Yarra
Advice to Council		As per above.
Other Business		<p>An Overview of the item was provided by Cr. Sophie Wade, outlining the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timing of the next meeting and format were discussed
Meeting closed		The meeting closed at 7.25 pm
Next scheduled meeting		An additional meeting may be scheduled if required and would likely be held online.