# Minutes

**Financial Sustainability Advisory Committee**

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| **Date** | 19 August 2026 |
| **Time** | 6:00pm-8:00pm |
| **Location** | Collingwood Town Hall, Wurundjeri Room |
| **Chair** | Councillor Kenneth Gomez |
| **Minute taker** | Anja Edwards |
| **Content Manager Reference** | D26/0349706 |

**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**

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| **Councillor/s** | Councillor Kenneth Gomez |
| **Committee members** | Colin Prasad, Mark Hoare |
| **Council Officers** | Anja Edwards (CFO), Matt Balfe (GM Corporate Services) |
| **Guests** | Matt Balfe – GM Corporate Services |
| **Apologies** | Councillor Andrew Davies, Steven Oon |

| Item number | Item title or subject | Minute notes |
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| 1. | Welcome and Acknowledgment of Country | The Chairperson welcomed the committee and presented the acknowledgement of country |
| 2. | Declarations of conflict of interests of interest | No declarations of interest noted. |
| 3. | Confirmation of minutes from previous meeting | The committee confirmed the minutes from the previous meeting. It was agreed to circulate minutes electronically after committee meetings to ensure that minutes could be confirmed by circular resolution prior to being published at Council meeting. |
| 4. | Reaffirmation of Committee purpose and scope | The Chairperson reaffirmed the committee purpose and scope. |
| 5. | Notice of withdrawal | No notices of withdrawal were received. |
| 6. | Review of Reports | 1. The committee reviewed and discussed the reports circulated prior to the meeting, including the Financial Sustainability Strategy, the Confidential Revenue and Rating report and the Quarterly Community Report. |

**Financial Sustainability Strategy**

- The committee discussed the importance of embedding financial sustainability into Council decision-making and long-term planning.
- Members noted that Council has established useful frameworks, but greater discipline is required to consistently apply them.
- The committee discussed that key decisions should be supported by cost-benefit analysis, identify any revenue shortfall, assess impacts on the Long-Term Financial Plan and clearly state whether the proposal aligns with the Financial Sustainability Strategy.
- Members discussed examples such as free parking trials and noted that reports should clearly state the financial impact and whether the decision aligns with Council's long-term financial sustainability objectives.
- The committee discussed service reviews and noted that the Financial Sustainability Strategy should be used as a key reference point when considering whether services should continue, change, reduce or cease.
- Members noted the importance of clearly identifying which services Council should provide, which services may be better delivered by others, how many people are impacted and what service changes mean for the community.
- The committee discussed asset utilisation and the opportunity to review Council assets and properties to understand utilisation, holding costs and whether assets could be better used to support community outcomes.
- Members discussed whether asset review and property strategy work should be included as part of the Financial Sustainability Strategy.
- Members discussed the value of education and financial management training for councillors to support informed decision-making.

**Quarterly Community Report**

- The committee noted that financial information in the Quarterly Community Report should be clearer, simpler and easier to understand.
- Members discussed the need for reporting to better explain the numbers, what they mean for the community and the long-term financial message.
- The committee noted that reports should help readers understand what Council money is being used for and what outcomes are being delivered for the community.
- Members discussed examples from other levels of government, including Federal Budget reporting, and how Council could use clearer visual explanations and plain-English commentary in future reports.
- The committee noted the importance of consistent reporting across Council documents, particularly where information is used to support major decisions.

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| | | **Revenue and Rating report**<br>• The committee discussed the objectives of differential rates and what other policy levers Council could consider to achieve similar outcomes.<br>• Members discussed waste-related matters, including public waste, household waste charges, commercial waste impacts on public bins, the allocation of public waste costs and opportunities to reduce waste.<br>• The committee discussed examples from other councils and other jurisdictions, including reusable container and deposit-style schemes.<br>• Members discussed whether Council could use local laws, incentives or other mechanisms to encourage businesses to reduce single-use packaging and reduce waste being disposed of in public bins.<br>• The committee requested further information on waste service costs, including the cost per service for glass, yellow and purple bin services.<br>• The committee requested that relevant employment, economic development and spatial planning material be circulated to members to support future discussion.<br>• The committee discussed potential revenue opportunities, including on-street charging, parking-related opportunities, electric vehicle charging, commercial use of Council land, waste-to-energy opportunities and other commercial activities.<br>• Members noted that further data would be required, particularly from an infrastructure and asset perspective, to properly assess these opportunities.<br>• The committee discussed the importance of community engagement, clearer communication and benchmarking Council's approach against comparable organisations. |
| Consensus position of the Committee agreed to out of session | | **That the Financial Sustainability Advisory Committee recommends that Council:**<br>1. Continue to strengthen the application of the Financial Sustainability Strategy in Council decision-making.<br>2. Ensure all significant Council proposals and decisions include:<br>o a cost-benefit analysis;<br>o identification of any revenue shortfall or ongoing financial impact;<br>o an assessment of impacts on the Long-Term Financial Plan; and<br>o a statement outlining whether the proposal aligns with the Financial Sustainability Strategy. |

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| | | 3. Improve the accessibility of financial information presented to the community through clearer reporting, visual presentation and plain-English explanations.<br>4. Continue to explore opportunities to improve financial sustainability through service reviews, asset utilisation, revenue diversification and efficient allocation of resources.<br>5. Further consider matters raised through the Revenue and Rating Review, including differential rating objectives, waste cost allocation and opportunities to influence waste reduction outcomes. |
| Other Business | | |
| Meeting closed | | Meeting closed at 8pm. |
| Next scheduled meeting | | 25 November 2026. |