

# Minutes

## Maribyrnong Community Recovery Committee

Meeting details	
<b>Date/Time</b>	Wednesday 19 February 2025 6.30pm to 8.00pm
<b>Location</b>	Maribyrnong Community Centre
Attendees	
Andrew Monteiro	Community Representative
Georgia Esplin	Flood Recovery Manager, MCC
Martina Holland	Independent Chair
Mary Cameron	Community Representative
Mike McIntosh	Director Planning and Environment, MCC
Paul Larsen	Community Representative
Susan Saunders	Community Representative
Cr Susan Yengi	Councillor Representative
Shweta Kawatra Dakin	GenWest Representative
Apologies	
Andy Chan	A/ Coordinator Emergency Management, Maribyrnong City Council (MCC)
Debora North	cohealth Representative
Melissa Eastwood	Manager Inclusive Communities, MCC
Mike Caridi	Community Representative
Nazim Bayrak	Community Representative
Wennie Van Riet	GenWest Proxy
Item	Subject
1	<b>Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country</b> The Chair, Martina Holland acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the land. She acknowledged the season, relationship between First Nations' culture, healing and recovery. The Chair advised that there is a document on the Emergency Recovery Victoria website about Aboriginal self-determination and recovery.

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**Conflict of interest declaration**

The Chair declared the following perceived conflicts of interest:

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  - Personally knows one of the lead researchers developing the community mapping tool from the University of Melbourne.
  - Previous employment of clinical psychologist David Younger.

The Chair advised that she does not benefit from either initiative, however will remove herself from decisions on these topics.

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**Endorsement of previous meeting minutes**

- 3 Members endorsed the previous meeting minutes.
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**Action item review**

- 4 See action table on pages seven to eight.
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**Project Updates**

Social recovery and young people

Storytelling projects:

- Council's Libraries, Arts and Culture team are preparing artist briefs for the public art and audio-visual storytelling project.
- The initial public artwork proposal was for sandblasting on the path next to the Maribyrnong River. Due to logistical challenges with sandblasting, the team recommended a series of steel inlays featuring words and symbols determined by the community. This would be located next to the benches along the Maribyrnong River trail on Chifley Drive, or alternatively on footpaths in Coulson Gardens.
- A brief has been prepared for the proposed audio-visual storytelling project, involving interviews with impacted community.
- Members discussed linking the two projects together with a QR code displayed at the site of the public artwork. Members indicated they are supportive of the concept and progress.
- Workshops to develop the children's story book have been scheduled. These will be led by 100 Story Building, with Cohealth's advice and involvement to integrate play therapy practice.
- **Action:** Council to share draft artist briefings for the storytelling project with CRC members.

- 5 Community connection events:

- The first of two live music events is scheduled for next Sunday 2 March from 2pm, featuring a range of musicians and entertainers.
- Other events scheduled over March include the Blackbird river cruise, gardening workshop and event, guided cycle tour along the river, guided river walks, garden tool repair cafes and barbeques.
- Floods + Me program has received positive feedback from parents and has 12 participants. The program is aimed at using art-based approaches to support youth aged 11 and older impacted by the flood. Upcoming activities through the program will also incorporate young people under 11 years old.
- Council's youth team will facilitate activities at the live music event on 30 March and have advised there are options to involve their Youth Advisory Committee in recovery and resilience initiatives, particularly preparedness.

Preparedness, health and safety:

- The River Watch page on the Council website will be built within the next week. Other pages relating to emergency management will also be updated.
  - The Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network member training day has been scheduled for 3 May and a community planning day has been scheduled for 10 May.
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- A preparedness campaign will be launched in April involving the Australian Red Cross and VICSES.
- The Emergency Management team recently trialled the Adaptation Game (TAG) with the Footscray VICSES volunteer unit. The board game is focused on climate adaptations and is overseen by Council's City Sustainability team, however it was trialled as a flood preparedness tool.
- VICSES will be hosting a drop-in session on 25 February from 4 to 6pm at the Maribyrnong Community Centre to provide the opportunity for community to give feedback on the draft Local Flood Guide.

#### Financial and built recovery

- Additional free hard-waste collections for flood-impacted residents will be returning from 31 March to 5 May, based on feedback from community.
- Shweta Dakin (GenWest) advised that the development of the *Flood Insurance Guide: a Maribyrnong Community Initiative* is progressing well and the launch event is scheduled for 28 March. The feedback from those involved in the guide's creation is positive, however there is a clear need for advocacy to improve the insurance system.
- The Chair enquired about advocacy initiatives underway by other stakeholders such as the Maribyrnong Community Recovery Association (MCRA).
- Cr Susan Yengi advised that she has met with MCRA representatives and Member for Fraser, Dr Daniel Mulino. Both are advocates for improvement to the insurance system.
- Shweta advised that each of the organisations involved in the Maribyrnong Insurance Project will be meeting to discuss advocacy opportunities.
- Paul Larsen advised he would be interested in being involved in advocacy initiatives. He requested:
  - The CRC write to Melbourne Water to request that a CRC member be represented on the Project Control Group for the Flood Mitigation Study
  - The CRC share a response to the Victorian Government's response to the Parliamentary Inquiry.
- He advised that the letter would be the first priority.
- **Action:** Chair to send letter to Melbourne Water to request CRC representation on their Project Control Group.
- **Action:** Paul Larsen to support with advocacy initiatives.

#### Disaster Ready Fund application

- Council's Engineering Services and Emergency Management team are exploring options to apply for a grant for flood mitigation scoping or implementation through the Disaster Ready Fund. A meeting has been scheduled with Emergency Management Victoria to discuss the proposed application.

#### Updates on Chifley Drive vacant land proposal

- Approvals are in place for Council to lease blocks on Chifley Drive proposed by the community to be repurposed for community use. Suggestions for the site have included a dog park or a community garden.
- Melbourne Water has agreed to provide a flood risk assessment report for development on that block, noting it is under the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay. Leasing the site will be dependent on the outcome of this assessment.
- Further consultation will be held about site use if the outcome of the report is favourable.

#### Update on partner CRC initiative

- Moonee Valley City Council's Community Recovery Committee has expressed interest in meeting and collaborating.
- Emergency Recovery Victoria have suggested a meeting with the Rochester CRC and are liaising with the Rochester recovery team to coordinate this.
- **Action:** Council to coordinate a meeting with the Moonee Valley CRC.

#### GIVIT resilience funding

- The Flood Recovery Manager advised that a tool library was deemed an eligible project for resilience project funding through GIVIT. She sought interest from members to participate in developing a project plan to seek funding for the initiative.
- Paul Larsen expressed interest in supporting the project plan development.
- **Action:** Council to liaise with Paul Larsen to develop a tool library project plan.

#### Group counselling sessions

- The Chair advised there is still funding remaining from a Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Grant specifically for sessions with clinical psychologist Younger.
- The Chair referred to a letter provided by David Younger detailing options for services to deliver to the community, including:
  - Individual sessions with CRC members
  - Group sessions with the CRC
  - Psychological first aid training for impacted community
  - Community information session – emotional preparedness focused

#### Discussion:

- Members requested a session led by David on what to expect in the third year of recovery, focusing on coping mechanisms and the health and well-being impacts.
- It was noted that for some community members, returning home can trigger complex emotions and re-traumatisation, as home may no longer feel safe.
- The Chair emphasised that while communities are often busy and distracted during the rebuild process, returning home can confront them with the reality and trauma of their experiences. She stressed that recovery is a long-term journey.
- Members expressed interest in having the session recorded so that the information is accessible to those who need it at a later time.
- Mary Cameron suggested that others, including elected officials, would benefit from psychological first aid training. She also expressed her support for a community session.
- It was noted that the Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network's training day will include a psychological first aid session by the Australian Red Cross which may address this need.
- Cr. Susan Yengi proposed inviting representatives from local community groups to participate in the psychological first aid training and the Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network activities.
- Shweta Dakin expressed interest in a mental health support circle, or a similar initiative, led by practitioners.
- **Action:** Council to investigate delivery of group counselling sessions with a focus on coping mechanisms and health impacts of the third year of recovery.

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Network mapping project

- The Chair sought a decision from members on the network mapping proposal discussed at the previous CRC meeting. The project would see in-kind support from the University of Melbourne to map the networks within Maribyrnong. The Chair noted that councillors have also expressed interest in this approach.
- Members agreed not to proceed with this project.

Decision on equine-assisted therapy project

- At the last meeting, the group were advised that scoping was underway for options for a youth equine-assisted therapy program, one of the ideas raised at the Maribyrnong Community Strengths and Opportunities Workshop.
- In scoping, the recovery team discovered a range of options, including farms about 30 minutes from Maribyrnong.
- The workshops would be trauma-informed and focus on hands-on interaction with horses, the farm and organic garden.
- Sessions could be delivered in small groups.
- Depending on the level of interest, the project is estimated to cost below \$5,000.
- Members expressed their support for the program.

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**Planning and Building Assistance Rebate Scheme (PBARS) Discussion**

- In previous meetings, members had raised concerns about the inaccessibility of the Department of Transport's PBARS scheme.
- Representatives from Cohealth and Council are scheduled to meet with the rebate administer, Windermere to discuss the rebate application process, provide feedback and discuss options to improve accessibility, including options for council to assist with verifying impact.
- The Department of Transport representatives have advised that receipts must be provided for the expenses, bank statements will not be accepted. Alternatively, a statutory declaration can be signed if receipts cannot be provided.

6 Discussion:

- Members advised that the level of documentation required is too extensive for trauma-impacted residents. Members emphasised the significant wellbeing impacts of the process. Members would like to see invoices and a proof of payment from a bank account considered sufficient evidence.
- Requiring receipts has posed a challenge for many, with cases of rebuilding being managed entirely by external parties who are unable to provide receipts.
- Members enquired whether Council could verify that a building surveyor has been paid through the initiation of a building permit.
- **Action:** Council to arrange a meeting with the Department of Transport to relay concerns about the PBARS scheme.

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**Social Recovery Sub-Committee update**

- 7 The Flood Recovery Manager advised that a face-to-face debrief and planning session is scheduled for the Social Recovery Sub-Committee on 26 February.

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**Terms of reference**

The Chair noted that the Terms of Reference (ToR) is due to be reviewed. A request for feedback was shared via email, with no feedback received.

8 Discussion:

- Members discussed the opportunities for extension presented at the last meeting. They advised they would like to continue with a predefined conclusion date, a future focus and a clear set of priorities.
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- The Chair raised the following considerations for the ToR, discussed at the January CRC meeting:
    - Role of project groups and community leads for project streams to capture methods for informed decision-making
    - Process for identifying needs
    - Sharing minutes online
  - The Flood Recovery Manager noted that changes to the ToR require Councillor Endorsement. Members questioned whether the changes could be considered administrative changes as opposed to material changes, and therefore do not require endorsement.
  - **Action:** Council to confirm if amendments to the ToR require Councillor Endorsement.
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### **General Business**

Mary Cameron raised the following:

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| 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasised how new people are moving into the area and encountering a lack of awareness of flood risk and insurance.</li> <li>• Community are active and advocating for change.</li> <li>• Case studies and stories are important to enable people to visualise the impact.</li> <li>• Mary is engaged in designing the plan for the public art and storytelling projects.</li> <li>• Yarning circles could be a good opportunity to foster connection and conversation.</li> </ul> |
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### **Key messages**

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| 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch of insurance resource and panel discussion scheduled for 28 March at 5.30pm</li> <li>• Local Flood Guide feedback is open, with face-to-face consultation opportunity on 25 February from 4pm</li> <li>• Range of social connection events being delivered over the upcoming months</li> <li>• Extension for additional free hard-waste collections</li> <li>• Encourage residents to apply for the Victorian Government Planning and Building Assistance Rebate Scheme – the CRC want to advocate to streamline the process and support others to navigate the application.</li> </ul> |
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### **Close meeting**

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| 11 | <p>The Chair closed the meeting.</p> |
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**Action Table**

Date	Action item	Responsible	Status	Notes
29/05/24	Chair to invite Dr Rob Gordon to a future CRC meeting due to his specialty with working with children and young people	Chair	Closed	Update February 2025: complete – invite extended. Members suggested opening the session to the broader community and recording the messages to be accessed by a wider audience.
24/07/24	Council to draft an article in the Maribyrnong Messenger for the second anniversary about the ongoing impacts of the flood on community	Council	Open	Update February 2025: this will be proposed for winter edition and work on other comms initiatives in the meantime
22/01/25	Susan and Mike to provide addresses of properties with overgrown nature strips	Susan and Mike	Closed	Update February 2025: complete
22/01/25	Council to investigate the whether a tool shed is eligible expenditure through GIVIT funding	Council	Closed	Update February 2025: complete
22/01/25	Council to investigate unkempt properties	Council	Closed	Item complete February 2025: property owners have been contacted
22/01/25	Council to add group counselling sessions to the agenda for the next meeting	Council	Closed	Update February 2025: complete
22/01/25	Members to provide feedback on the ToR via email	All	Closed	Update February 2025: complete
22/01/25	Council to investigate a DRF application	Council	Open	Update February 2025: ongoing – application is being investigated with the Engineering Services team
19/02/25	Council to share draft artist briefings with members	Council	Open	
19/02/25	Chair to send letter to Melbourne Water to request CRC representation on their Project Control Group.	Chair	Open	
19/02/25	Paul Larsen to support with advocacy initiatives.	Paul Larsen	Open	
19/02/25	Council to coordinate a meeting with the Moonee Valley CRC	Council	Open	
19/02/25	Council to liaise with Paul Larsen to develop a tool library project plan	Council	Open	
19/02/25	Council to investigate delivery of group counselling sessions with a focus on coping	Council	Open	

	mechanisms and health impacts of the third year of recovery			
19/02/25	Council to arrange a meeting with the Department of Transport to relay concerns about the PBARS scheme accessibility.	Council	Open	
19/02/25	Council to confirm if amendments to the ToR require Councillor endorsement	Council	Open	