

Minutes

Maribyrnong Community Recovery Committee

Meeting details	
Date/Time	Wednesday 20 August 2025 6.30pm to 8.00pm
Location	Maribyrnong Community Centre
Attendees	
Andrew Monteiro	Community Representative
Georgia Esplin	Flood Recovery Manager, MCC
Martina Holland	Independent Chair
Mary Cameron	Community Representative
Mike Caridi	Community Representative
Paul Larsen	Community Representative
Apologies	
Andy Chan	A/ Coordinator Emergency Management, Maribyrnong City Council (MCC)
Melissa Eastwood	Manager Inclusive Communities, MCC
Mike McIntosh	Director Planning and Environment, MCC
Shweta Kawatra Dakin	GenWest Representative
Cr Susan Yengi	Councillor Representative
Wennie Van Riet	GenWest Proxy

Item	Subject
1	<p>Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country</p> <p>The Chair, Martina Holland opened the meeting with an acknowledgement of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted this is the last Winter meeting and we will shortly be moving into the tadpole season in First Nations' seasons.</p> <p>The Chair also noted that parts of the meeting will be filmed as part of the audio-visual storytelling project. Members were asked to advise if they do not want to be filmed. Members expressed they were comfortable to proceed.</p>
2	<p>Conflict of interest declaration</p> <p>No conflicts were declared.</p>
3	<p>Endorsement of previous minutes</p> <p>Members endorsed the last meeting minutes from 6 August 2025.</p>
4	<p>Action item overview</p> <p>See action item overview on page 6.</p>
	<p>Flood Recovery Plan and Flood Recovery Transition Plan</p> <p>The Chair advised that the following documents had been provided via email for feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Recovery Plan (amended based on feedback at previous meetings) • Flood Recovery Transition Plan (internal Council document to guide the transition process away from funded recovery to ensure continuity of progress on key recovery priorities)
5	<p>Discussion</p> <p>Municipal Recovery Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members would like additional time to review the Municipal Recovery Plan for endorsement at the next meeting • The Chair stated that she considers it to be a risk that there is no mention of funding for ongoing staff positions to lead the transition from funded recovery to future resilience projects. She highlighted that given Maribyrnong's significant risk profile, her advice would be to build an ongoing recovery to resilience lead position into the organisation as an operational function. <p>Flood Recovery Transition Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Larsen advised that the Flood Recovery Transition Plan should include an action to allocate a staff member to prepare long-term project proposals, identify grant opportunities and prepare submissions so that the

community priority projects are shovel-ready when funding becomes available. He would like to see this include a focus on incentivising resilient rebuilding. He noted that it could be significant time before the advocacy priorities are funded, however there is a need to dedicate staff to project planning for when this happens and seek funding opportunities.

- Andrew Monteiro advised there is a need for the resilience programs to be ongoing and remain on Council's agenda.

Action: Council to re-send Municipal Recovery Plan and Flood Recovery Transition Plan for feedback.

Community Representative *blank canvas* session

The Chair provided a summary of where the CRC has been since it was established (see attached).

Members advised that the free Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre memberships and additional hard waste collection programs should be added to the list as impactful programs.

The Chair opened the floor to each of the community representatives. She advised this time can be considered a *blank canvas*. With only four meetings left, the goal of this section is to ensure all members have the opportunity to raise anything they think is important at this point.

Mike Caridi

Mike highlighted the importance of timing. He observed that initially after the flood, many of the right initiatives were delivered potentially at the wrong time. He advised that initially after a disaster, the most important activity is to provide 'boots on the ground' and be visibly providing tangible support.

When reflecting on what he wanted to achieve as a CRC member, Mike said the two key priorities are delivering the appropriate literature on how to be prepared, and helping community understand what has changed for the agencies involved in response following the flood. He also noted the importance of insurance support.

Mike advised he would like to hear from Melbourne Water and VicSES directly on the following points:

1. Where am I getting warnings from? What if I don't have a phone? Who do I receive these from? Where can I find the river gauge?
2. How can we be confident in the warnings?
3. What has been improved since the flood?
4. Can agencies commit to undertaking an exercise per year?

Mike advised he wants to feel confident that the flood preparedness initiative will be impactful by ensuring the inputs are accurate.

Andrew Montiero advised he would like to understand how mitigation outcomes from the Melbourne Water Flood Mitigation Study may change the data from the flood model and have implications for warnings.

Action: Council to invite Melbourne Water to the next meeting to pose questions about what has changed.

Action: Martina to review the Q&A document drafted by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee responding to questions raised at the Maribyrnong Community Planning Day Workshop for accessibility.

Mary Cameron

Mary read a poem that she wrote when reflecting on the CRC.

She also highlighted the continual need to repair and maintain trust with community. She advised that many residents in her street experienced flooding in their yards however it did not impact their house. She advised that many of these residents were rejected for the rates rebates available to impacted community, which she feels damaged the relationship between council and community. She advised that the relationship may not have been damaged if it was clear they were not eligible before applying. She advised these residents still have pride in place, and many irreplaceable items were damaged in residents' gardens.

Mary also advised she would like to see a list compiled of resources available to support people in the aftermath of a flood from the beginning.

Andrew advised that a lot of services were available in the first twelve months, but many did not know what was available. He advised that simple things like guidance to find a geotechnical engineer would be helpful.

Andrew Monteiro

Andrew advised that we will likely see cases of people who took early cash settlements requiring assistance. Many of these people took cash settlements that were insufficient to rebuild without the knowledge or support to dispute the amount.

He also highlighted the need for mental health support and that people are still struggling. He emphasised the need to find opportunities to continue to provide mental health and wellbeing support, as well as legal support for insurance claims.

Andrew also highlighted the need to focus on the value of the community and the people, not the value of the houses. He noted that after the flood, volunteers washed his clothes and linen and returned this to him and his family, he asked "where else would you find this in a community?"

Paul Larsen

Paul has been reflecting on the following question: "What do we do better next time?"

He also highlighted a need for the following items:

- Victoria Police to update their processes for closing the road during a flood event as they did not close off all roads that were flooded – he saw someone drive into flood waters
- VicSES to communicate what has changed based on their learnings in 2022
- An annual simulation exercise with all agencies involved in flood response
- Council to continue to advocate for community needs *long-term*
- An ongoing role to support future planning, with an emphasis on advocacy and supporting the development of project plans that are ‘shovel-ready’ so that initiatives like resilient rebuilds are ready as soon as funding becomes available
- Mental health support - moving home doesn’t mean it is over – the four in his household are all at different stages of recovery
- Continuous learning from others

Paul observed that many in the community have rebuild ‘as is’ instead of raising their homes or making them more resilient for future flooding. He emphasised that advocacy for resilient rebuilding incentives needs to continue long-term so that next time it floods, the opportunity is available to communities before they start rebuilding.

He ended by posing the question “How do we make this better for the next generation?”

Andrew highlighted the need for residents to be able to learn from each other.

Key messages

Members identified the following key messages for members to share with community:

7

1. The CRC are connecting with Melbourne Water to seek clear, tangible information on what has changed since October 2022 and the reliability of the data available
 2. The CRC and Council are planning for a smooth transition away from funded recovery programs. This planning aims to embed ongoing recovery priority activities into operational council activity across all directorates
 3. We are in this together
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Close meeting

8

The Chair thanked members for their participation, vulnerability, and time.

Members highlighted that recovery is a long-term process and will continue in Maribyrnong for a long time to come.

Date	Action item	Notes
19/02/25	Council to liaise with Paul Larsen to develop a tool library project plan	Update June 2025: This item is parked as logistics are considered.
19/03/25	Council to investigate puppy play therapy for a future event and Mary to suggest options for puppy therapy providers	Update June 2025: This will be considered for future events e.g. anniversary
30/04/25	Melbourne Water to advise on the outcome of the CRC request to be represented on the Project Control Group for the Flood Mitigation Study	Update July 2025: Melbourne Water are finalising the governance structure and are looking to include an option for members to bring along a community representative
28/05/25	Council to initiate history group meetings and invite Mary Cameron	Update July 2025: In progress. Council has contacted Working Heritage as requested by Mary
25/06/25	Council ask the Insurance Council of Australia to confirm whether insurance premiums could be impacted by the Property Flood Risk Cards	Update August 2025: Response from the ICA is pending
06/08/25	Council to invite a Melbourne Water representative to an upcoming CRC meeting to discuss the Google Flood Hub proposal	Update August 2025: Invite sent for next meeting pending response
06/08/25	Council to invite the CRC and Maribyrnong Neighbourhood Flood Network to a small group session on interpreting the property flood risk cards.	Update August 2025: Briefing sessions will be scheduled
06/08/25	Council to request photos of Anna's photography to share with the CRC	Update August 2025: Printed copies were provided this meeting – members recommended that consent be sought from the households depicted in the images
06/08/25	Council to liaise with members to prepare a learning-sharing presentation	Update August 2025: The preparation of a presentation is in progress. Mike Caridi advised he would be happy to support the presentation.
20/08/25	Council to re-send Municipal Recovery Plan and Flood Recovery Transition Plan for feedback	
20/08/25	Council to invite Melbourne Water to the next meeting to pose questions about what has changed post-flood	
20/08/25	Martina to review the Q&A document drafted by the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee responding to questions raised at the Maribyrnong Community Planning Day Workshop for accessibility	

