



WHITEHORSE CITY COUNCIL

2021-22 Federal Pre-budget Submission

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Introduction

About Whitehorse

The City of Whitehorse is in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, with around 180,000 residents. It includes Blackburn, Blackburn North, Blackburn South, Box Hill, Box Hill North, Box Hill South, Burwood, Burwood East, Forest Hill, Mitcham, Mont Albert, Mont Albert North, Nunawading, Surrey Hills, Vermont and Vermont South. It also includes the Major Activity Centre in Box Hill.

Whitehorse Vision

We aspire to be a healthy, vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community supported by strong leadership and community partnerships.

Demographics of a smart city with strong migrant heritage

More than 38% of Whitehorse residents were born overseas. In Box Hill, 28.2% of residents were born in China. More than 125 languages are spoken. The most common include Mandarin, Cantonese, Greek, Italian, Vietnamese, Hindi and Sinhalese.

Post-WWII European migrants contributed to the development of our suburbs, along with many arrivals from the UK. This century, migrants from China, India, Malaysia and Hong Kong are contributing to the next Whitehorse chapter. The scale and influence of Chinese migrants settling in our city has been the subject of considerable commentary, including a recent article commissioned by the Scanlon Foundation.¹ Changing demographics contribute to our prosperity, while creating an imperative to provide services and facilities that respond to changing needs over time.

Whitehorse attracts international students to our schools, Box Hill TAFE and VET providers, and to the nearby campuses of Deakin, Monash and Swinburne universities. Box Hill and Whitehorse have been attractive to skilled and employer sponsored migrants and business investors.

Whitehorse has a high rate of 35.9% of residents with a Bachelor or Higher Degree qualification, compared to 27.5% in Greater Melbourne. Major employment sectors are in health, education, retail and other professional fields.

Challenges and opportunities for prosperity

COVID border closures have had a disproportionate impact on local Whitehorse families, businesses and the education sector. New migrants and international students in insecure accommodation, work or with limited access to safety nets have been economically vulnerable.

Local retail and hospitality precincts have been impacted since January 2020. Long lockdowns have compounded difficulties for small and medium enterprises. Affordable housing remains a significant challenge, and population growth must be accompanied by renewed sporting and cultural amenities.

Major infrastructure projects such as the Suburban Rail Loop and North East Link may benefit Whitehorse in 7-10 years, but will cause huge disruption in the short term. During the COVID recovery, effective partnerships between all levels of government will support to economic success and social cohesion in Whitehorse. We propose several partnership opportunities and advocate for the Federal Government to develop a National Housing Strategy.

¹ https://scanloninstitute.org.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/Scanlon%20Institute_Narrative%206_v15.pdf

Community, sport and leisure projects

Box Hill City Oval



The City Oval is a significant sporting and recreation facility in Whitehorse and the eastern region. The new facilities will support the growth in women’s participation in sport and will provide access to elite facilities for female participants, including players, officials, media, spectators and volunteers. This redevelopment will also allow double header AFLW and VFL to be played in a safe and comfortable environment, with the provision of change rooms to accommodate both home and away teams. The wider Box Hill and Whitehorse community will also benefit from the upgrade, with an upgrade of walking paths, fitness equipment and table tennis equipment.

The redevelopment includes the refurbishment of the existing south pavilion, demolition of existing north pavilion to be replaced with new three level community pavilion including player amenities, social community space and offices / media and officials, upgrade of existing lights and scoreboard and community facilities including walking trails and recreation facilities.

Key information	
Council contribution	\$5.5 million
Could commence	2021, subject to securing full funding
Provides employment	Direct employment for 107 full time over 16 months
Key benefits	Supports participation of women (including at elite level in cricket and AFLW), and enhanced community amenity in surrounding environs
Seeking in Federal budget 2021-22	Up to \$10 million*

* Funding partnership with Victorian Government is also being sought.

Hagenauer Reserve (Box Hill Athletics Club)



Box Hill Athletics Club supports thousands of athletes including little athletics and hosts national championships. Some urgent work is required to the venue as sections are becoming unusable and there is a lack of sun protection.

The club recently hosted the Olympic selection trials for the 10,000m event. The track’s location inland and sheltered nature make it one of the fastest in Australia, which is critical for gaining Olympic qualification times. In December 2020, a World Record for T20 800m was set at this track. In addition, Athletics Australia has asked the club to host a series of middle distance races to assist athletes to for the Tokyo Olympics.

This track and venue hosts beginner athletes, elite athletes and premier events. To maintain its amenity for large events and record-setting times, it is important that these upgrades occur.

Key information	
Could commence	2020/21
Key benefits	<p>Maintain facilities for elite competition. Provide for improved junior and community participation and improved amenity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletics Facility Lighting (150LUX LED): \$650,000 • Entrance Terracing, Landscape Enhancements and Drainage Improvements: \$60,000 • Shelters and sunshade: \$45,000 • Pole vault facility: \$55,000
Seeking in Federal budget 2021-22	\$810,000

Morack Golf Course redevelopment



The redevelopment and upgrade of Morack Golf Course will provide an inclusive facility to cater to professional and amateur golfers across the generations, including a new pro-shop, café, user driving range and car park. With the additional funds, the redevelopment will include enhanced and inclusive user facilities, driving range and family mini-golf, to attract and meet the interests of a wide range of participant groups.

Once completed, the facility will be able to host regional tournaments, as well as encourage community inclusion and new up and coming golfers.

Key information	
Council contribution	\$7,230,000
Project cost	\$11,205,000
Onsite work commences	July 2021
Project duration	Two years
Provides employment	Direct: 12 / Indirect: 42
Key benefits	Upgrade an existing public golf facility for tournaments and community use. Provide an inclusive, accessible and family-friendly facility that provides opportunities for a range of abilities across the generations.
Seeking in Federal budget 2021-22	\$3,975,000

Nunawading Gymnastics and Sports Club Upgrade

Council’s [Indoor Sports Facility Feasibility Study](#) has identified priorities to redevelop facilities to meet existing user demand and future participation. The study identifies that needs have changed with the changing demographics of our diverse community and provide for an increasing number of sports that are played indoors. The Study also prioritises redevelopment or upgrade of existing facilities ahead of building brand new facilities.

Among the priority locations where the existing facilities need to be upgraded to meet the needs of the community is the Nunawading Gymnastics and Sports Club Upgrade.

This is a community facility supporting recreational and junior gymnasts.

Council seeks funding for project scoping and detailed design, to make the project ‘shovel ready.’

Key information	
Council background	Prioritised site for upgrade in endorsed Council study. Council will be better positioned to achieve partnership funding for construction if the project is ‘shovel ready.’
Project cost	\$250,000 for detailed planning and design. Construction costs likely to be in range of \$2m-2.5m.
Key benefits	Upgrade an existing public facility for recreational gymnastics and junior users. This location and sport has been prioritised after extensive consultation and feasibility research into the Indoor Sports needs of Whitehorse, taking into account changing demographics and unmet demand.
Seeking in Federal budget 2021-22	\$250,000 for detailed planning and design

Social Housing

Whitehorse City Council is a member of the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) comprising of six Local Government Areas in Melbourne's east, which has the primary objective of advocating for increased funding in regard to the number of social housing dwellings across the region (given the low numbers of social housing compared to the Melbourne average). In addition, Council is part of an alliance of thirteen Councils in Melbourne's east and south east calling for urgent action for more social housing to end homelessness. Together they have adopted the [Regional Local Government Homelessness & Social Housing Charter 2020](#) which recognises that: housing is a human right for every person, housing solves homelessness and social housing is core infrastructure that is needed in local communities. People having secure and appropriate housing is the first step in addressing the often complex social and health needs of the region's most vulnerable community members.

Providing a safe home first, as part of a broader social housing framework, is the way to end homelessness. Only then can the compounding set of circumstances leading to homelessness be properly addressed to enable better outcomes for vulnerable people facing extreme adversity. Homelessness is more likely to affect those most vulnerable in our society including women and children fleeing family violence, people with a disability, people living with a mental health condition, people living in poverty, women over 50 and marginalised groups.

The charter prioritises three regional commitments which the 13 Councils have commenced acting on:

- Work in partnership with federal and state government, public and private sector partners in a coordinated approach to deliver meaningful outcomes to increase the provision of social housing and respond to homelessness in east and south east Melbourne.
- Scope land within each LGA that has the potential to be re-purposed for adaptable housing needs, including both publically and privately owned land.
- Advocate together for inclusive housing growth including mandatory inclusionary zoning.

In the 2020/21 Federal Budget we are seeking:

A **Federal Government** commitment to working with Local and State governments and relevant housing stakeholders to identify and map under-utilised Commonwealth land suitable for development opportunities that include social housing.

A **Federal Government** commitment to develop a National Housing Strategy that supports a whole of government and industry approach, identifies the full range of instruments required to achieve outcomes, returns the social housing stock to a 6% share of all occupied housing stock by 2036 and establishes a national reporting framework.

The issue has been increasing since COVID-19, which has further pushed vulnerable people into crisis, especially women and children experiencing family violence and those on low incomes. These include the 'new vulnerable,' people who have lost jobs and homes as a result of COVID-19, creating an escalation in the number of people experiencing homelessness and crisis, many for the first time.

Conclusion

The Whitehorse community is a skilled, entrepreneurial, diverse and cohesive municipality. Our prosperity relies significantly on the international education sector, the successful settlement of migrants and the ability for entrepreneurs and business people to apply their skills and trade freely.

We have the right elements for a strong COVID recovery, with some support in the right places as well as appropriate responses from the three levels of Government.

A significant program of infrastructure projects with a commitment to local procurement will provide economic stimulus at the right time. Investment in community infrastructure and a pipeline of future projects will ensure we maintain sufficient and appropriate facilities for a cohesive, successful community.

Partnership across all levels of government are important to ensure our recovery is well supported.

For further information about this submission: To discuss any elements of this submission, please contact:

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