



**City of  
Whittlesea**

**2022–23  
Australian  
Government  
pre-Budget  
submission**

**JANUARY 2022**



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# Foreword

**This pre-Budget submission seeks Australian Government co-investment in four small to medium sized projects in the City of Whittlesea:**

- 01 Aboriginal Gathering Place**
- 02 headspace for the North**
- 03 Northern Sports and Aquatic Centre**
- 04 E6 Freeway**

These projects will advance the Australian Government's 2021 infrastructure plan by:<sup>1</sup>

- building a stronger, more secure region
- growing the economy
- enhancing living standards
- ensuring our region delivers world-class infrastructure.

They are also consistent with Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021-2051.<sup>2</sup> Developed by the independent advisory body Infrastructure Victoria, this strategy recommends:

- prioritising infrastructure delivery in growing communities
- funding libraries and aquatic centres in growth areas
- delivering infrastructure for a more responsive and integrated mental health system

1. Infrastructure Australia, 2021, *Reforms to meet Australia's future infrastructure needs: 2021 Australian infrastructure plan*

2. Infrastructure Victoria, 2021, *Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021-2051*

3. KPMG, 2021, *The widening divide in Melbourne: how COVID-19's transmission through the city increased the existing inequality.*

4. SGS Economics and Planning Pty Ltd, 2020, *Whittlesea 2040 COVID-19 impacts: research report outline*, p20.

5. City of Whittlesea, 2021, *Municipal pandemic readiness and recovery plan, January - June 2021.*

## Pandemic impacts in the City of Whittlesea

A 2021 report by KPMG found the pandemic was having an unequal impact across Melbourne, creating areas of more and less advantage across the city and exacerbating existing income disparity.<sup>3</sup>

The City of Whittlesea has been particularly hard hit. Already socioeconomically disadvantaged – the ABS rates the City of Whittlesea the fifth most disadvantaged of Victoria’s 31 metropolitan local governments – residents routinely contend with:

- limited access to public transport, health services, and educational opportunities
- unemployment and insecure employment
- long commutes and traffic congestion
- financial vulnerability and rental and mortgage stress
- social isolation.

The pandemic has intensified these issues. By February 2020, the City had sustained a 5.8% decline in jobs, higher than Victoria at 5.2% and Australia at 3.6%.<sup>4</sup>

In mid-2020, a survey of residents revealed:<sup>5</sup>

- 56% of parents were concerned about their children’s social wellbeing
- 66% of respondents felt the pandemic was having a negative impact on their mental health
- 60% of respondents felt less connected to their community
- 33% of businesses had laid off casual workers
- 16% of businesses had stood down permanent staff
- 72% of businesses could not operate remotely
- more than 80% of businesses had lost revenue and customers.

This situation has worsened with every wave: by June 2021, the City’s unemployment rate, for example, had increased to 8.4%.

It is imperative that the Australian and Victorian governments work with Council to address these impacts and fast-track our COVID-19 recovery program. Your co-investment in the partnership opportunities outlined here will help to do so by delivering infrastructure and services that:

- support local businesses and employment
- promote physical and mental health and community connections
- optimise public value.

We welcome your support.



**Lydia Wilson**  
Chair of the Panel  
of Administrators



**Craig Lloyd**  
Chief Executive Officer



# Partnership opportunities

Our priority partnership opportunities are crucial to our region's post COVID-19 recovery and government efforts to 'build back better'.

They support best practice infrastructure objectives, including:

- the Australian Government's 2021 infrastructure plan
- Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021-2051.

They advance Council's key strategic goals:

## A connected community

- Partnership opportunity 01: Aboriginal Gathering Place
- Partnership opportunity 02: headspace for the North
- Partnership opportunity 03: Northern Sports and Aquatic Centre (NSAC)

### For the City of Whittlesea, a **connected community** means:

- a socially cohesive community
- a healthy and safe community
- a participating community.

### We are working towards this by:

- promoting gender equality, social connection and inclusion
- preventing family violence and discrimination
- reducing barriers to services and facilities.

## Liveable neighbourhoods

- Partnership opportunity 04: E6 Freeway business case (by 2023) and E6 Freeway (by 2035).

### For the City of Whittlesea, **liveable neighbourhoods** mean:

- a smart, connected transport network
- well-designed neighbourhoods and vibrant town centres
- housing that meets diverse needs.

### We are working towards this by:

- developing safe, connected walking and cycling paths within mixed-use precincts
- improving transport infrastructure.

# About Whittlesea

**Located in Melbourne's northern suburbs, about 20 kilometres from the CBD, the City of Whittlesea is one of Melbourne's largest municipalities, covering some 490 square kilometres.**

**The Wurundjeri Willum people – the original inhabitants of the area – are the Traditional Owners of this land.**

## People

The City of Whittlesea has the second largest population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in metropolitan Melbourne.

It is also home to a vibrant migrant community, with more than 35% of residents born overseas and almost half speaking a language other than English at home.

## Communities

More than 70% of the City of Whittlesea is rural, but most residents live in the City's established suburbs of Bundoora, Epping, Lalor, Mill Park, and Thomastown.

These established areas, along with Mernda, Doreen and South Morang, will continue to grow, but our highest population growth over the next 20 years is expected to be in Epping North, Wollert and Donnybrook.

## Industry

The three largest industry employers are health care and social assistance, retail trade, and construction, with significant employment precincts in Epping (the Northern Hospital and Epping Plaza), Plenty Valley South Morang and University Hill Bundoora.

## Socioeconomic disadvantage

The City of Whittlesea is the 5th most socioeconomically disadvantaged of Victoria's 31 metropolitan local governments.

Around 17% of residents live in poverty, with 40% of children under 15 in Thomastown living in poverty – compared with Melbourne at 12.6% and Victoria at 13.2%.



## KEY STATS

### POPULATION



**242,027 residents in 2021**  
expected to increase by 32% by 2030 and 60% by 2040 with the addition of 8,000+ new residents each year and 60+ babies each week

### LOCALITIES



Beveridge  
Bruces Creek  
Bundoora  
Donnybrook  
Doreen  
Eden Park Epping  
Humevale  
Kinglake West  
Lalor  
Mernda  
Mill Park  
South Morang  
Thomastown  
Whittlesea  
Wollert  
Woodstock  
Yan Yean

### AGE



Median age **34 years**

**27.7%**  
of population  
aged 0-19

**16.2%**  
of population  
aged over 60

### GENDER



**50.6%**

Females

**49.4%**

Males

### HOUSEHOLDS



**42%** couples with children

**22%** couples without children

**16%** single person households

**12%** one-parent families

### CULTURE



**2nd**

largest Aboriginal population  
in metropolitan Melbourne

**35.5%**

born overseas

**44%**

speak a language other than  
English at home  
including Macedonian (5.1%),  
Arabic (5%), Italian (5%), Greek  
(3.7%) and Punjabi (3.2%)

### EDUCATION



**20.2%**  
of children in the City of  
Whittlesea were vulnerable  
on one or more childhood  
development domain(s)  
(compared with 19.9% of  
children in Victoria)

**45.6%**  
aged 15+ held educational  
qualifications  
(compared to 52.2% in  
Greater Melbourne)

**46%**  
had no qualifications  
(compared with 38.6% in  
Greater Melbourne)

**18.1%**  
had vocational qualifications  
(compared to 15.3% in  
Greater Melbourne)

**18%**  
had a Bachelor or higher degree  
(compared to 27.5% in  
Greater Melbourne)

### EMPLOYMENT



**57.6%**  
were employed full-time

**33%**  
were employed part-time

**7.2%**  
were unemployed

**26%**  
were employed as professionals  
or managers (compared with  
38% for Greater Melbourne)  
By June 2021, the unemployment  
rate had increased to 8.4% as a  
direct result of COVID-19

Partnership opportunity:

# Aboriginal Gathering Place

01

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**Partnership opportunity 01: Aboriginal Gathering Place**

REQUEST	AMOUNT
<p><b><i>We are asking the Australian Government to:</i></b> partner with Council to ‘close the gap’ on health, education, and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Melbourne’s north-east by co-investing in a \$12M purpose-built Aboriginal Gathering Place in Quarry Hills Regional Park, South Morang, to be completed by 2025.</p> <p><b><i>Council will contribute \$3M as well as resources for ongoing operational support and is seeking \$5M from the Victorian Government.</i></b></p>	<p><b>\$4M</b></p> <p>Electorate: <b>Scullin</b></p>

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**Project description**

An Aboriginal Gathering Place is a welcoming, inclusive, and culturally safe space where all Aboriginal people have a sense of belonging. It is a space designed to foster reconciliation and healing, for Aboriginal people as well as non-Aboriginal people, with access to programs and services that strengthen culture and enhance wellbeing.

Establishing an Aboriginal Gathering Place in the City of Whittlesea has been a key priority of the local Aboriginal community for more than 20 years.

Australian Government investment in this project will advance key ‘closing the gap’ targets as national, state and local governments work together with the City of Whittlesea Aboriginal community and Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation.

Left: Whittlesea Aboriginal Gathering Place  
Advisory Group member and Gunditjmara woman  
Karen Bryant at Quarry Hills Regional Parkland

CONTINUED

Partnership opportunity 01:

## Aboriginal Gathering Place

9. Infrastructure Australia, 2021, *Reforms to meet Australia's future infrastructure needs: 2021 Australian infrastructure plan*.

### Project rationale

Fourteen Aboriginal gathering places already exist in Victoria, but none is located in the City of Whittlesea. This is despite the City having the second largest – and fastest growing – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in metropolitan Melbourne and five local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

The local Aboriginal community has already identified the Quarry Hills Regional Park in South Morang as their preferred site. One of the defining landscapes of the City of Whittlesea, this unique area is surrounded by natural habitat.

It provides easy access to connect with Country, space to balance private cultural ceremonies and community programs, and opportunities to facilitate connection across the broader regional park and with the community.

Council is committed to providing ongoing operational support for the centre and will be working closely with the local Aboriginal community to ensure that once established, the centre:

- derives its own income streams and becomes self-sustaining
- includes employment opportunities for local Aboriginal community members who have reduced access to employment.

This vision is supported by Infrastructure Australia's call for social infrastructure that<sup>9</sup>:

- is multi-purpose and closely integrated within communities
- includes accessible, adaptable and high-quality facilities and spaces that can respond to changing community needs
- provides inclusive and culturally safe services and places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Project benefits

The Australian Government has identified key 'closing the gap' targets for early education, employment, and school attendance. The Aboriginal Gathering Place will advance progress toward these targets through a range of programs including:

- bush kinder programs that foster connection to Country and Indigenous culture
- 'Welcome Baby to Country' ceremonies
- procurement of Aboriginal businesses during the centre's design and construction
- job creation, with Aboriginal organisations and businesses providing programs and services at the centre (e.g., the Wurundjeri's Narrap land management team)
- primary and secondary school programs and enhanced programs for 'at risk' students, with approximately 300 students attending the centre each week for environmental and cultural programs.



#### EARLY EDUCATION

✓ on track

##### **95% of all indigenous four-year-olds enrolled by 2025**

- Bush kinder programs to foster connection to Country and indigenous culture
- ‘Welcome Baby to Country’ ceremonies



#### EMPLOYMENT

✗ not on track

##### **Halve the gap by 2018**

- Procurement of Aboriginal businesses during design and construction
- Job creation, with Aboriginal organisations and businesses providing programs and services at the centre



#### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

✗ not on track

##### **Close the gap within five years by 2018**

- Primary and secondary school programs, including enhanced programs for ‘at risk’ students, with 300 students attending the centre each week for environmental and cultural programs

These outcomes are supported by research that shows Aboriginal gathering places have positive impacts on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Gathering places<sup>10</sup>:

- enhance physical health through improved attendance and participation in community health checks, chronic disease screening and specific health programs
- boost social and emotional wellbeing through the development of social support networks and social connection
- enhance pathways to education and employment
- enrich cultural awareness and cultural identity through cultural activities and links to community networks
- empower community members through leadership development and mentoring.

Aboriginal gathering places also benefit the wider community by:

- maximising the contribution of Indigenous people’s skills and knowledge across the community and economy
- fostering mainstream awareness of and respect for Aboriginal culture
- providing increased opportunities for reconciliation activities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

These outcomes will have a positive impact on government and community costs associated with poor health and economic and social disadvantage. They are consistent with the goals and ethos of the Australian Government’s *National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan 2021–2031* which aims to:

- embed a holistic perspective on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- recognise the strengths of culture as a protective influence on physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

10. Indigenous Health Equity Unit University of Melbourne and Gathering Place Reference Group, 2016, *Health and wellbeing outcomes of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander gathering place model in Victoria: a place for inclusion, connection and empowerment, Final report for the Department of Health and Human Services*, ppv-vi.

Partnership opportunity:

# headspace for the North

02

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## Partnership opportunity 02: **headspace for the North**

### REQUEST

**We are asking the Australian Government to:**  
establish a full headspace facility in the northern part of the City of Whittlesea

### AMOUNT

**\$750K**

Electorate:  
**McEwen**

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### Project description

Establishing a full headspace in the North will help relieve pressure on our limited mental health services and provide significant health benefits to young residents, whose mental health care needs have intensified as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and their families.

### Project rationale

Service expansion lags well behind the City's rapid population growth. The need for a full headspace centre – we currently have a satellite site – was pressing before COVID-19. It is now extreme.

The Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Care Network (EMPHN) has identified the City of Whittlesea as 'an area of high need' with:<sup>11</sup>

- fewer adolescent mental health services than other municipalities in the region
- the highest rate of high or very high psychological distress in the network catchment for people over 18
- the highest rate of emergency department presentations with anxiety in the network catchment.

The City of Whittlesea's overstretched service providers are consistently reporting:

- an increase in the number of young people seeking mental health support, with 15% experiencing a high level of psychological distress – higher than the state average of 13%<sup>12</sup>
- an increase in the number of risk assessments conducted each week
- wait times of up to four weeks for an initial assessment and eight months for ongoing counselling with a specialist clinician or counsellor.

<sup>11</sup> Bell, T, Mendoza, J, Stretton, A, and Salvador-Carulla, L, 2018, *EMPHN integrated mental health and AOD service atlas (East and North East Melbourne) – Final report.*

<sup>12</sup> Whittlesea Community Futures, 2021, *Lockdown survey June 2021.*

CONTINUED

Partnership opportunity 02:  
**headspace  
for the North**

**Project rationale *continued***

Yflex, which is funded to provide free public mental health support to young people with more complex care needs, reports an increase in:

- the number of referrals they receive from individuals and from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- the complexity and risk in the referrals they receive
- the number of referrals they are unable to accept who must then look to private providers for mental health care, despite not having the means to do so.

Factors contributing to the high rates of mental ill-health in our City include:

- high rates of disadvantage
- high rates of poor health
- high levels of unemployment
- low household incomes – a high proportion of residents earning less than \$400 per week
- a high proportion of groups vulnerable to poor mental health outcomes.

The pandemic has intensified these factors.  
In the City of Whittlesea:

**23%**

of young people aged between 18 and 24 reported experiencing **high psychological distress** – compared with 16% of Victorians

**39%**

of young people reported experiencing **hardship during the first lockdown** – compared to 24% of Victorians

**30%**

of young people reported experiencing **financial hardship** in February 2020 – compared to 16% of Victorians, with **17% reporting they had lost their job** – compared to 10% of Victorians.<sup>13</sup>

This is consistent with OECD research which states:<sup>14</sup>

*The mental health of young people has been significantly impacted by the COVID 19 crisis. Prevalence of symptoms of anxiety and depression has risen dramatically among young people and remains higher than pre crisis levels... and compared to other age groups, even as economies partially re-open.*

*The worsening of mental health can be attributed to disruptions to access to mental health services, the wide ranging impacts of school closures, and a labour market crisis that is disproportionately affecting young people.*

The impacts and disruption to young people's education, skill development, employment, finances and overall wellbeing are likely to have ongoing and long-term consequences for young people themselves and their communities. However, as the OECD also states:<sup>15</sup>

*With adequate support and timely intervention, young people experiencing mental distress may be able to bounce back as we recover from the COVID 19 crisis. This will require a scaling up of existing mental health support in education systems, workplaces and health systems, and comprehensive policies to support young people to remain in education, or to find and keep a job.*

13. City of Whittlesea, 2021, *Agenda of scheduled council meeting held on Tuesday 6 April 2021 at 6.30pm, Item 6.1.3*

14, 15. OECD, 2021, *Supporting young people's mental health through the COVID-19 crisis.*



## headspace

In 2018, the EMPHN allocated funding to pilot a headspace outreach service at the City of Whittlesea's EDGE Youth Facility in South Morang for 12 months. High demand for the service clearly demonstrated the need to secure ongoing funding.

A satellite facility was funded the following year and continues to operate, providing intake, assessment and limited clinical counselling three days a week.

Unlike a fully funded headspace, this satellite service cannot offer integrated, holistic care plans that provide general medical and alcohol and other drugs support, as well as education, training and employment support.

Long waiting periods and the absence of an integrated service means many young people cannot access essential services in a timely way and their mental health declines further, with their relationships, employment and other community activities adversely affected.

## Project benefits

Untreated mental health problems in young people can have a significant impact on their development and progress to independent adulthood.

It is well established that access to expert mental health supports early in life and early in a mental health episode can:

- prevent interruptions to education, training and employment and the associated long-term impact of such interruptions
- reduce feelings and experiences of social isolation
- minimise high risk-taking and substance misuse.

**A full headspace could provide integrated mental health support to approximately 600 young people and help break the cycle of disadvantage.**

This infrastructure and the health and social benefits a full headspace would provide are consistent with Australian and Victorian government initiatives and advice, including:

- the Australian Government's *Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan*
- the *National Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Response Plan* which aims to support the mental health of Australians during and after the COVID-19 pandemic
- *Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021-2051* which recommends the delivery of infrastructure for a more responsive and integrated mental health system (recommendation 72).

Partnership opportunity:

# Northern Sports and Aquatic Centre

03

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**Partnership opportunity 03: Northern Sports and Aquatic Centre**

**REQUEST**

***We are asking the Australian Government to:***

partner with Council to generate \$791M of economic value for the northeast region and expedite the region's pandemic health and wellbeing recovery by co-investing in the development of the \$113M Northern Sports and Aquatic Centre.

**AMOUNT**

**\$20M**

**Electorates:  
McEwen & Scullin**

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**Project description**

The City of Whittlesea has committed to building a state-of-the-art regional sports and aquatic centre in the growth suburb of Mernda.

Estimated to cost \$113M, the Northern Sports and Aquatic Centre is Council's single biggest investment in health, wellbeing, and economic and community connection.

It aims to ensure our region and our community emerge from the pandemic healthier and more economically secure.

Australian and Victorian government investment in the project will ensure the project can be developed to the scope and scale needed to reduce the burden of chronic disease and deliver social, health promotion and community building benefits.

CONTINUED

Partnership opportunity 03:  
**Northern Sports and Aquatic Centre**



**10%**

## Project rationale

The impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic on physical and mental health has highlighted the need for government investment in social connection, with sport and active recreation now a crucial component of any government's social reactivation agenda.

Our municipality has been more affected by the pandemic than most other municipalities in Australia – sometimes shouldering over 10% of active cases in Victoria.

Physical inactivity accounted for 2.5% of the **total disease burden in Australia in 2018** and was responsible for:<sup>16</sup>

- 20%** due to type 2 **diabetes**
- 17%** due to uterine **cancer**
- 16%** due to coronary **heart disease**
- 12%** due to **dementia**
- 12%** due to **bowel cancer**
- 9%** due to **stroke**
- 3%** due to **breast cancer**.

**Research shows increasing the rate of physical activity by just 10% can reduce disease and death related to physical inactivity by 13% and 15% per year respectively.**<sup>17</sup>

With 44% of adults residing in Whittlesea doing insufficient physical activity – the second highest proportion in north-eastern Melbourne – it is unsurprising that the City of Whittlesea also has:<sup>18</sup>

- ▶ the **highest proportion** of adults who are **overweight** in north-eastern Melbourne – **58%**
- ▶ the **sixth highest proportion** of adults with **heart disease** in Victoria – **7%**
- ▶ the **third highest proportion** of adults with **type 2 diabetes** in Victoria and the highest in north-eastern Melbourne (along with Darebin) – **6%**
- ▶ high rates of adults with **arthritis** (25%) and **osteoporosis** – **20%**.

Our community engagement shows strong support for the sports and aquatic centre, with 72% of survey respondents rating the centre's importance at 7/10 or higher and 45% rating it as 10/10.<sup>19</sup>

16. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018, *Australian burden of disease study 2018: interactive data on risk factor burden*.

17. Boston Consulting Group, 2017, *Intergenerational review of Australian sport*.

18. Victorian Population Health Survey, 2017, *Dashboard, selected results and quick statistics for local government areas and time series data (2015-2017)*, LGA Snapshot.

19. Sport and Leisure Solutions, 2018, *Mernda aquatic centre planning study, City of Whittlesea, November 2018*, p10.

## Project benefits

Council estimates the Northern Sports and Aquatic Centre will attract up to 550,000 visits per year.<sup>20</sup>

It will run at a profit once fully operational and bring economic benefits to the City and state.

Recent research by KPMG (with state and national governments) shows increased participation in sport and physical activity:<sup>21</sup>

- reduces the risk of chronic disease, dementia and falls
- improves mental health and wellbeing
- provides volunteering benefits
- improves education and employment outcomes
- reduces anti-social behaviour
- increases connectedness and inclusion
- increases community pride and identity
- encourages urban renewal.

These health and social benefits have a direct impact on state and national health costs, with research showing:

- sport and active recreation create economic growth and jobs in any community, with \$7 of value created for Australians for every \$1 spent in the sport sector<sup>22</sup>
- the average pool visit generates \$26.39 in improved health outcomes and consequent reductions in health spending and absenteeism.

**In relation to the City of Whittlesea and NSAC, these figures would equate to:**

**\$791M**

**of economic value for the northeast region**

**\$14.5M**

**in improved health outcomes and consequent reductions**

**in health spending and absenteeism.<sup>23</sup>**

Council also estimates the centre's construction will generate around 800 jobs, including 430 local jobs, comprising:

- 135 direct jobs in the local building and construction sector
- 241 jobs in indirect intermediate industries
- 54 jobs through indirect consumption impacts.<sup>24</sup>

These benefits will flow to the broader economy, creating an additional 354 jobs within Australia.<sup>25</sup>

Using targeted procurement strategies, Council will work to ensure the jobs created include genuine employment opportunities for local young people, Aboriginal people, people with a disability, and culturally and linguistically diverse residents.

These outcomes will advance the Australian Government's commitment to creating employment opportunities and improving the physical wellbeing of all Australians.

They support the National Mental Health and Wellbeing Pandemic Response Plan which aims to ensure all Australians emerge stronger from the pandemic.

They are consistent with recommendations by Infrastructure Australia and Infrastructure Victoria to:

- support Australians to enjoy a healthier, safer, more connected and fulfilled quality of life by facilitating targeted investment in the right physical and digital social infrastructure<sup>26</sup>
- fund libraries and aquatic centres in growth areas in the next five years.<sup>27</sup>

20. City of Whittlesea, 2019, Council Minutes, Tuesday 12 February 2019, Item 6.2 Community services, p 145.

21. KPMG, 2020, *The value of community sport and active recreation infrastructure*, commissioned by Sport and Recreation Victoria identifies the value of sport and active recreation infrastructure across the State annually.

22. Boston Consulting Group, 2017, *Intergenerational review of Australian sport*, p9.

23. Royal Life Saving, 2017, *Economic benefits of Australia's public aquatic facilities: industry report*, p10.

24. City of Whittlesea, 2021, Agenda – Scheduled Council Meeting 6 December 2021, 5.1.2 Provision of leisure, aquatics and sports court facilities in Mernda, p14.

25. Ibid, p15.

26. Infrastructure Australia, 2021, *Reforms to meet Australia's future infrastructure needs: 2021 Australian infrastructure plan*, recommendation 8.1.

27. Infrastructure Victoria, 2021, *Victoria's infrastructure strategy 2021-2051*, recommendation 73.

Partnership opportunity:

# E6 Freeway

business case by 2023  
and E6 delivery by 2035

04

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**Partnership opportunity 04: E6 Freeway business case by 2023 and E6 delivery by 2035**

REQUEST	AMOUNT
<p><b><i>We are asking the Australian Government to:</i></b> finalise the business case for the delivery of the E6 Freeway by 2023 and bring forward delivery of the E6 to 2035.</p>	<p><b>\$10M</b> allocated in 2021-22 Budget for business case</p> <p>Electorates: <b>McEwen &amp; Scullin</b></p>

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**Project description**

The proposed E6 Freeway connecting the dated and overused Hume Freeway to the M80 Ring Road will provide a much-needed north-south corridor through the City of Whittlesea.

The Australian Government has already shown strong support for this project, announcing \$10M funding in its 2021-22 Budget to develop the business case, matching the Victorian Government’s allocation.

But with the population booming in the City of Whittlesea and neighbouring municipalities, we are urging the Australian and Victorian governments to complete the business case by 2023 and bring forward development to ensure completion by 2035, not commencement by 2035 as previously determined.

CONTINUED

Partnership opportunity 04:  
**E6 Freeway**

### Project rationale

Projections suggest a 32% population increase for the City of Whittlesea alone by 2030, with the Mitchell Shire (on our northern border) expected to grow by almost 90%, and Banyule (on our eastern border) expected to grow by 10%.

Each day, more than 180,000 vehicles travel north-south through the City of Whittlesea along High Street/ Epping Road, Plenty Road, Dalton Road and Edgars Road. These roads vary in lane numbers, traffic management installations, and connections, and are already operating well beyond their capacity.

While current upgrades to Plenty Road and recently announced upgrades to High Street/ Epping Road will assist with congestion issues, they are inadequate substitutes for an additional north-south route connecting our growing communities to the M80 Ring Road and Hume Freeway.

Current and growing traffic congestion and rapid population growth make it imperative that the E6 is traffic ready by 2035 by adopting the following proposed timeline:

- ▶ **complete business case by 2023**
- ▶ **complete detailed project planning by 2024**
- ▶ **commence construction by 2027**
- ▶ **complete construction and delivery by 2035.**

Land along the designated route is already reserved, and while some environmental and civil engineering studies need to be completed, no known impediments to this proposed timeline exist.



## Project benefits

The E6 is a freeway of national significance, providing a key national road corridor servicing NSW, ACT, Queensland and Victoria. It will integrate and connect planned and existing trade gateways and nationally significant manufacturing and distribution clusters.

Capable of carrying more than 80,000 cars per day, it will also connect established suburbs and growth areas and improve access to regional employment centres for residents from the outer north. At the local level, the E6 will:

**create more liveable communities** by supporting future passenger and freight rail services to Melbourne's north and west, reducing the freight network's overall impact on communities and the environment

**service freight traffic movement** to and from the proposed Beveridge Freight Terminal and Melbourne Airport, supporting domestic and international freight

**increase the mobility** of City of Whittlesea residents by providing an essential north-south road connection along the Northern Growth Corridor, especially Epping North, Wollert, Donnybrook, Kalkallo, Beveridge and Wallan

**provide accessibility** to jobs, education and other social and economic opportunities for residents in this growth corridor

**increase road capacity and reduce traffic congestion** on arterial roads including Epping Road/High Street, Dalton Road, Edgars Road, Cooper Street, Plenty Road and Yan Yean Road, streamlining commuting.

Rescheduling this project for completion by 2035 is consistent with the Australian Government's efforts to secure Australia's rapid recovery from the COVID-19 global pandemic economic downturn.

It is consistent with Infrastructure Australia recommendations 4.1 and 4.11:<sup>28</sup>

- maximise the overall benefits of transport investments by aligning transport programs with place-based objectives
- maximise the place-shaping impacts of transport investment by linking transport infrastructure funding decisions to published population and land use objectives.

It is also supported by Infrastructure Victoria recommendation 76:

*In the next 15 years, deliver a program of upgrades to Melbourne's arterial road, freeway and bus networks beyond what is currently funded, focusing on congested roads and corridors in outer metropolitan and growth suburbs council areas.*

<sup>28</sup> Infrastructure Australia, 2021, *Reforms to meet Australia's future infrastructure needs: 2021 Australian infrastructure plan*

# Summary of partnership opportunities

REQUEST	AMOUNT
<p><i><b>We are asking the Australian Government to:</b></i></p> <hr/> <p><b>o1</b> partner with Council to ‘close the gap’ on health, education, and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Melbourne’s north-east by co-investing in a \$12M purpose-built <b>Aboriginal Gathering Place</b> in Quarry Hills Regional Park, South Morang, to be completed by 2025.</p> <p><i>Council will contribute \$3M as well as resources for ongoing operational support and is seeking \$5M from the Victorian Government.</i></p>	<p><b>\$4M</b></p>
<p><b>o2</b> establish a full <b>headspace facility</b> in the northern part of the City of Whittlesea</p>	<p><b>\$750K</b></p>
<p><b>o3</b> partner with Council to generate \$791M of economic value for the northeast region and expedite the region’s pandemic health and wellbeing recovery by co-investing in the development of the \$113M <b>Northern Sports and Aquatic Centre</b></p>	<p><b>\$20M</b></p>
<p><b>o4</b> finalise the business case for the delivery of the <b>E6 Freeway</b> by 2023 and bring forward delivery of the E6 to 2035</p>	<p><b>\$10M</b>  <small>allocated in            2021-22 Budget for            business case</small></p>

## CONTACT

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### **Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners**

The City of Whittlesea recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this Country and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the traditional owners of this place.