



**11.1 ECOCENTRE REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER: BRIAN TEE, GENERAL MANAGER, CITY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

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**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To advise Councillors of the award of tender RFT000179 for the 'Port Phillip EcoCentre Redevelopment' and the timeline for construction.

**2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 In May 2021 Council publicly announced the redevelopment of the Port Phillip EcoCentre (EcoCentre) to be undertaken, in partnership with the Victorian Government.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 17 October 2022, Council in a confidential report, authorised an increase to the Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) financial delegation to award tender RFT000179 'Port Phillip EcoCentre Redevelopment' at the conclusion of the procurement process, for the purposes of the Port Phillip EcoCentre Redevelopment contract. The confidential report required that, once the contract was awarded, details of the contract and the process would be made public via a council report (this report).
- 2.3 The October report enabled the construction tender to be awarded and the CEO to enter into the contract on behalf of Council, following a recommendation from the Tender Evaluation Panel.
- 2.4 The contract has been awarded to Stosius and Staff Constructions Pty Ltd.
- 2.5 The overall EcoCentre Redevelopment project budget is \$6.7m, inclusive of planning, design and construction, with Council and the Victorian Government each contributing half of the funding.

**3. RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

- 3.1 Notes the award of the tender for the construction of the Port Phillip EcoCentre building to Stosius and Staff Constructions Pty Ltd.
- 3.2 Thanks the Victorian Government for its 50% funding contribution toward the EcoCentre Redevelopment Project.

**4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES**

**Procurement Process and Outcome**

- 4.1 The procurement process commenced with an Expression of Interest process, where shortlisted respondents were invited to tender for the project. Tender documentation was issued on 15 June 2022 and submissions closed on 22 July 2022.
- 4.2 Under delegation authorised by Council on 17 October 2022 the CEO awarded the tender in March 2023.



4.3 The contract has been awarded to Stosius and Staff Constructions Pty Ltd.

**Port Phillip EcoCentre delivery**

4.4 Council has a long-term partnership with the EcoCentre which includes annual funding for community and school education programs, and a Council Plan commitment to fund the redevelopment.

**Redevelopment Project Background**

4.5 The EcoCentre has been housed in a Council-owned facility located on the edge of the St. Kilda Botanical Gardens since 1999, under a facility agreement with a peppercorn lease. This facility is a repurposed and extended garden keeper's residence.

4.6 Due to constraints on growth, comfort levels, and an assessment that the building was not 'fit-for-purpose', Council funded two Business Cases, a Concept Design and an Economic Benefits Analysis to assess options for the EcoCentre. This included an assessment of alternative sites and, in 2017, recommended redevelopment on the existing site.

4.7 In the 2019/20FY the Council Plan included a commitment to the EcoCentre redevelopment subject to the Victorian or Australian Government providing 50 percent matched funding of the total project costs.

4.8 The project progressed through concept design, community consultation, detailed design and final design. A Heritage Permit has been obtained and the Building Permit will be finalised following contract award.

4.9 The EcoCentre building in the St Kilda Botanical Gardens was vacated in early 2022 and staff and operations were relocated to the Cora Graves Centre on Blessington Street.

**5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS**

5.1 The EcoCentre organisation was engaged through the project design process. This included the broader community via Council's Have Your Say.

5.2 Limited engagement was possible throughout the tender process in line with the tender probity rules.

5.3 A communication plan is now in place to support the redevelopment, with various communications activities being rolled out aligned with key construction milestones. These include a letter box drop, updated website and site signage.

**6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Risk implications are being managed through the project management framework and associated risk management approaches.

**7. FINANCIAL IMPACT**

7.1 Prior to the tender process, Council undertook value management processes to reduce the project scope and cost as much as possible.

7.2 Council engaged two quantity surveyors in May 2022 to inform the project budgets for tender for the EcoCentre Redevelopment Project. The upper bound of this range was adopted for project planning.

7.3 Consistent with the current market conditions for capital projects, the price of the overall project was greater than the initial project budget.



7.4 Following advocacy from both Council and EcoCentre in October 2022, a further funding commitment from the Victorian Government amounting to half the additional EcoCentre Redevelopment costs was received.

7.5 The EcoCentre redevelopment project is budgeted at \$6.7m with fifty percent of the funding for the project being provided by City of Port Phillip and fifty percent by the Victorian Government. This overall budget has been included in the Draft Council Budget endorsed at the 19 April 2022 ordinary Council meeting.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

8.1 The redeveloped EcoCentre is aiming to achieve a 6 Star Green Star (Design and as Built) and will therefore include a range of environmental design features.

## **9. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

9.1 The redeveloped EcoCentre will allow for continued and enhanced delivery of community programs.

## **10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY**

10.1 The Act and Adapt – Sustainable Environment Strategy 2018-28 is a core strategy under the Strategic Direction in the Council Plan 2021-31 of Sustainable Port Phillip.

10.2 Action 24 of Council's Act and Adapt - Sustainable Environment Strategy 2018-28 states: Contribute to the EcoCentre redevelopment (subject to external funding). Continue to invest in EcoCentre programs that support an environmentally aware community.

10.3 This includes a Council Plan commitment that: 'We will partner with the EcoCentre, the Victorian Government and other key stakeholders, to deliver programs that support an environmentally aware community and to redevelop the EcoCentre building'

## **11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

### **11.1 TIMELINE**

11.2 The redevelopment is scheduled to commence May 2023 and be delivered by mid-2024.

## **12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST**

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any material or general interest in the matter.

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Nil**