

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

COUNCIL MEETING 7 MAY 2025



Councillor Question Time

Question from Councillor Halliday:

When the assessment of occupancy was completed on Lydon Street, what level of occupancy did we see on that street, and did it include both sides of the street or just the rail reserve side?

Response: *When the request to review parking controls in Lyndon Street was received, Council officers conducted spot occupancy surveys across morning, midday, and afternoon periods. Across these surveys, the highest recorded occupancy occurred during the midday period, with a peak of 72% across both sides of the street, equating to 24 available parking spaces at the busiest time.*

In assessing this request, officers applied Council's Parking Management Policy. The Policy sets an 80% occupancy threshold which ensures parking decisions are consistent, equitable, and inclusive. Changes to parking restrictions are only triggered where this level is regularly exceeded.

Given this trigger is based on the availability of parking spaces, officers assessed combined occupancy across both sides of Lyndon Street to reflect total supply and demand. Based on the data and site visits conducted, there were no observed issues with residents or their visitors being unable to find a parking space in Lyndon Street. Importantly, there were no road safety issues identified on Lyndon Street in relation to recreational vehicle parking that would warrant immediate parking management interventions.

The amenity impacts caused by the long-term storage of caravans, trailers, and boats, which are not covered by the Parking Management Policy, are proposed to be addressed through the Local Law review process.

Question from Councillor Buckingham:

Last week I visited 106 Barkly Street, St Kilda which is the location of an artist's studio and gallery. We heard from one of the committee members of the artist's studio at the previous planning meeting because their premise is due to be developed. They are losing their long standing space where they create art. What activities can the City of Port Phillip do to support artists creating their work in the municipality with particular interest to our pop-up program?

Response: *Council officers from the Arts team visited the studios and met with members of the Committee, where they discussed the below initiatives to support and enable their artists to continuing creating work in Port Phillip.*

1. *The Committee will put together a pitching document to Council, outlining the history of the organisation, benefits to the local arts community and requirements for a new location.*

Outcome: This would be shared with Council's property team and property owners to try and find a suitable space and achieve a long-term lease arrangement.

2. *Officers to investigate the establishment of a pop-up program directory where creative businesses like 106Art can list themselves to be promoted to real estate agents/ owners.*

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Outcome: This could provide both a long term and short-term solution depending on the size and suitability of the space.

- 3. The Committee will apply for a Cultural Development Fund (CDF) Projects grant to run a public event from their current location which celebrates the history of the organisation.*

Outcome: To build awareness of the important role the organisation has played in supporting Port Phillip's artistic community and generate interest from local businesses and donors.

In the meantime, officers will continue to explore other options with 106Art, with the aim of finding a long-term solution for their artists which allow them to continue creating work within the municipality.

Item 10.2 Endorsement of Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2026-2029

Question from Councillor Halliday:

We collect registration fees from our dog owners, but we also conversely employ Animal management and Local Laws officers, and supply dog off leash parks etc. Do we have an idea of what our outlay is annually of supporting our dog community compared to the revenue generated from dog registrations?

Response: *Reporting regarding animal management services do not include Local Laws officers or the dog off leash parks, the Animal Management Services income and costs for financial year 2023/2024 are included below.*

Total Service Income Approximately \$0.86M

Total Service Costs Approximately \$1.18M

The 2023/2024 Budget for Animal Management Services was rates funded \$322K. The income from pet registrations does not currently cover the cost of the service, but as the entire community benefits from animal management services, it is reasonable that a small portion of resident rates contribute to the cost of this service.

13.4 Policy and Plan Completion Updates

Question from Councillor Halliday:

In relation to the Nature Strip and Street Gardening Guidelines. Why does this have a short time frame of only two years?

Response: *The Nature Strip Guidelines (NSG) were adopted on 3 August 2022. At the time there was a lot of community interest in the Guidelines and therefore a two-year review clause was placed on them. This meant that they were due for review at the end of 2024.*

The review period was missed for a variety of reasons, the main one being that the focus for the Urban Forest team was the completion and adoption of the new Urban Forest Strategy (UFS), which was adopted in August 2024. This was closely followed by Council elections.

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We also had staff change over in our Community Greening Officer role over the summer and were managing the associated resource shortage.

Reviews for Guidelines are usually a minimum of 6 months, which meant in the period the NSG would have been reviewed we were developing a new Strategy.

Through the development of the new UFS, we did hear from the community on nature strip gardening, and UFS contains actions to increase the number of nature strips across the municipality to expand permeable surfaces (action 19), and to support community in engaging with planting nature strips through the NSG (action 22).

We do know that the NSG have been well received and are well used. Over the last six months we have been collecting data from across Council to do a desk top assessment of the NSG. What we have found is that:

- the NSG are not always easily interpreted, as the same questions are regularly asked*
- Lack of maintenance has become a reoccurring safety problem, and clarity within guidelines would be beneficial*
- Community seek understanding on the use of raised edging, within legacy gardens, 'new' gardens, and to differentiate between similar structures (tree plots, etc)*
- Placement of planter boxes requires clarification, and linking to current Footpath Trading Guidelines would be beneficial*
- Clarifying guidelines for planting within tree plots would provide more opportunities for community-led planting, and less risk to tree health*
- Community would benefit from simplified statements for what is and isn't permitted on nature strips (no items, plants and mulch only).*
- Further images that provide examples of structures (raised edges, tree plots, etc) would improve guidelines*

Council officers are now using this information to relook at the format and language of the NSG to determine the best way to make improvements. The intention will be to retain all the current 'rules' in the Guideline but just make it easier to understand. We plan to come to Council early in the new financial year with some further information and timelines for delivery.

The Policy and plan completion updates report (7 May) extended the review period for the NSG to June 2026 to ensure there was time to undertake any unforeseen work or delays.

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