

Advocacy Strategy 2024-28



City of Port Phillip

99a Carlisle Street, St Kilda, VIC 3182

ASSIST 03 9209 6777

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Womin djeka

Council respectfully acknowledges the people of the Kulin Nations.

We pay our respect to their Elders, both past and present.

We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.



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An advocacy strategy provides a roadmap of how the organisation can work together with key stakeholders to translate effort into outcomes.

Introduction

From Fishermans Bend to Elwood, there is so much on offer in the City of Port Phillip for residents, traders, and visitors. Yet, there remains much we can do to develop and improve our area. As our City continues to grow, our residents expect maintained and updated infrastructure and services. They also expect that Council is ensuring the City's liveability into the long term.

The City of Port Phillip has ambitious plans to deliver its strategic priorities, including improving inclusiveness, liveability, sustainability, vibrancy, and governance. Examples include enhancement to our transport network, childcare services, waste management services, open and green spaces and community infrastructure.

Council currently delivers over 100 different services and infrastructure projects that support our community, however, Council needs support from its partners to achieve its future ambitious plans. Therefore, Council needs to enlist the support of the Victorian and Australian governments to help fund new infrastructure and services and update policies to meet contemporary needs.

Developing a strategic approach to the way we advocate to these stakeholders is essential. This strategy intends to strengthen the planning, coordination, and efficiency of our advocacy program to maximise Council's chances of success and deliver the best outcomes for our community.

This strategy will outline our approach by detailing:

- how we determine Council's advocacy priorities;
- how we assess and prioritise advocacy that is community-driven, evidence based and realistic;
- the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in advocating for Council priorities;
- how we develop and implement effective advocacy plans;
- when and how Council works in partnership with other stakeholders, including local government associations and peak bodies; and
- how we report and review priorities.

This strategy will be a valuable resource for our Councillors, Officers, community, and external partners to better understand how we advocate.

Objectives:

The objectives of this strategy are to:

- Provide transparency on the strategic assessment and identification of advocacy issues, opportunities and priorities
- Increase funding for the delivery of Council programs, services and projects that benefit the Port Phillip community
- Influence government legislation, policy or practices, to the overall benefit of residents, our local environment and businesses
- Build trust

About Port Phillip

Port Phillip is located on the northern shore of Port Phillip Bay, south of the Melbourne Central Business District, Victoria, Australia. The City of Port Phillip is part of the Kulin Nations – a region spanning from the southernmost point of Victoria up into the Great Dividing Range – the area we now call ‘City of Port Phillip’ has been inhabited by the Bunurong, Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri peoples for over 40,000 years.

One of the oldest areas of Melbourne, it is known for its many dynamic urban villages, a foreshore which stretches for over 11 kilometres, cultural diversity, magnificent heritage buildings, artistic expressions and beautiful parks and gardens.

The City encompasses a total land area of 21 square kilometres, including the suburbs of Albert Park, Balaclava, Elwood, Fishermans Bend (part), Middle Park, Port Melbourne (part), Ripponlea, South Melbourne, Southbank (part), St Kilda, St Kilda East (part), St Kilda West, St Kilda Road, Melbourne, (part) and Windsor (part).

The City of Port Phillip is largely a residential and commercial area, with substantial industrial and office land use. The southern and eastern areas are generally residential in nature, while the central part of the City is focused around Albert Park Lake. The northern and western areas are dominated by employment uses and commercial areas, including shopping and lifestyle strips along several of the main roads.

Port Phillip's major employment sectors are professional, scientific and technical services, construction, health care and social assistance, and retail.

In 2022, the estimated resident population for City of Port Phillip was

103,990

with a population density of 5,052 persons per square kilometre, making it the most densely populated municipality in the state.

Challenges and opportunities:

Every opportunity comes with its challenges, however every challenge is an opportunity. As such, the City of Port Phillip is well-positioned to maximise the opportunities of the future for Melbourne, despite the complex issues it faces, such as:

- financial stresses and job losses exacerbated by increased cost of living and other economic impacts;
- extreme disadvantage and poorer health outcomes for some members of the community;
- homelessness and housing affordability;
- risks associated with the climate emergency and the need to contribute to the solution;
- waste costs and the need for recycling improvements; and
- infrastructure investments, particularly in areas such as, Fishermans Bend which will require increased public transportation options and new open space.

Furthermore, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the visitor economy in the municipality has been significantly impacted and visitation in key tourist destinations, such as St Kilda, is yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels. The international and interstate tourism market, including backpackers, continues to remain critical to the growth and sustainability of the visitor economy in Port Phillip.

These challenges are not insurmountable and effective advocacy including key partnerships will ensure Port Phillip's vital tourism sector can be restored. With the support from government partners and agencies, Council is confident that Port Phillip's visitor economy will not only recover, however continue to grow in the future ensuring that St Kilda, and its surrounds, maintains its reputation as Melbourne's playground.

Port Melbourne

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is the process of working with key decision makers to drive change that benefits the community.

Advocacy is an important tool used by councils to raise awareness of, and champion issues that are within their control, as well as outside their control.

Council is at the heart of their communities, therefore are best placed to respond to their needs and advocate for priorities that are important to its people and places. This means taking action to influence or partner with other levels of government, agencies, decisions makers and key stakeholders to deliver funding, projects, services or policy change that will benefit the local community.

Effective advocacy requires Council to have a clear understanding of the issues and challenges facing their community, and objectives on how to address and solve such challenges or opportunities.



Community is at the heart of Council's advocacy

Why does the City of Port Phillip advocate?

Council works to represent the community and to deliver on the needs and expectations of residents. City of Port Phillip's strategic directions are detailed in the Council Plan 2021-31. These strategic directions were developed via a thorough community engagement process and underpin community expectations and provide a framework for Council's advocacy agenda.

Council also campaigns for support to enhance its service delivery, particularly requests for new public amenity and infrastructure, community assets and improved planning and policy decisions.

To support Council in achieving its objectives, partnerships with other levels of government and its agencies are critical, particularly in a highly challenging economic environment. Furthermore, government bodies have a responsibility under the Local Government Act 2020 to collaborate with other councils, governments and statutory bodies to benefit their communities. Collaborating on Council's key priorities provides the perfect opportunity for all levels of government to deliver meaningful community initiatives that also support statutory obligations. A part of this involves aligning this strategy and associated advocacy objectives for priority areas with relevant state and federal policy frameworks.

How do councils advocate?

Effective advocacy is done by seizing any opportunity to promote council's key messages and inform government of these priorities. However, for government to partner with councils on an advocacy priority, they must feel there is an economic, social, or political imperative and are enthusiastic about the solution that the proposal delivers.

Additionally, government must be confident that the council will deliver the project efficiently, that the outcome will enhance life for the community and political risks are considered.

Approaches to council advocacy can include:

- Regular, positive and meaningful engagement with all local federal and state parliamentarians (letters, presentations, meetings).
- Strategic engagement with federal and state ministers, shadow ministers and other parliamentarians, including crossbenchers and parliamentary committee members.
- Proactive engagement with state and federal government department representatives.
- Participation in the work of peak bodies and regional organisations, including M9, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Committee for Melbourne, the Victorian Local Government Association (VLGA) and other memberships.
- Strategically identifying and applying for grants to secure funding to deliver the council's advocacy priorities (where possible).

- Undertaking community and public awareness campaigns, including community meetings, events and developing collateral to raise awareness of issues and to influence decision making and encourage community involvement.
- Engagement with local state and federal election candidates, in the lead up to elections.
- Making and leveraging policy submissions to government, parliamentary and policy enquiries.
- Identifying and responding to strategic media and communication opportunities to assert advocacy priorities, including delivering media, print and digital communications to promote their broad advocacy agenda.

In addition to these approaches, a critical component of successful advocacy is establishing strong partnerships and relationships. These, coupled with political rationale, provide a compelling case to support advocacy priorities.

Roles and responsibilities

Effective advocacy requires a coordinated plan where roles and responsibilities are well defined. Operational management of advocacy is led by Council’s Advocacy and Partnerships team, however, Councillors, Council executive and officers and the community all contribute to identifying and advocating for Council’s key priorities.

<p>Mayor and Councillors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse advocacy strategy, framework and priorities • Spokespeople on advocacy issues (led by the Mayor) • Develop and maintain relationships with key stakeholders and community to support Council’s advocacy • Submit new advocacy proposals for consideration by Council • Receive updates on planning and evaluation of advocacy campaigns
<p>CEO and Executive Leadership Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive advocacy priorities • Accountable and responsible for the implementation of the advocacy priorities and strategies of Council • Owners of relationships with key government departments, stakeholders, and community groups • Tactical decision making on advocacy priorities • Receive updates on planning and evaluation of advocacy strategies
<p>Advocacy and Partnerships team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Executive, Mayor and Councillors in the delivery of advocacy action plans • Development of draft advocacy strategy, framework and priorities • Organisational capacity building • Provide advice and support on implementation of action plans • Media relationship management • Reporting and evaluation
<p>Managers and Council officers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of expert advice to support advocacy priorities • Stakeholder and community management, including supporting advocacy messaging • Identification and submission of potential advocacy opportunities

How can community get involved?

Best practice advocacy relies on a ‘whole community approach’ involving Council, residents and traders.

Council fosters a participatory decision-making process that relies on community members, community groups and businesses contributing their feedback and sentiment to shape key priorities. Community involvement and voices provide a political imperative to advocacy causes, which often rely on political support.

Community members can influence Council’s advocacy priorities by engaging with Council through our surveys, Have Your Say, direct feedback, or through community groups. Residents and businesses can also advocate through regular dialogue with their local Members of Parliament (MP), letters to Ministers, petitions and by attending Council meetings.

When seeking support from government, it is critical that local MPs are aware of the community support for projects and can see the potential benefits of seeking funding on behalf of these stakeholder priorities.

The City of Port Phillip will always achieve more with the support of the community and when the community plays an active and public role. If you think you can play a role in supporting any of Council’s key priorities or have suggestions for major initiatives that are not currently listed, please contact Council using [My Port Phillip](#).

Who are Council’s advocacy networks?

Council is committed to continuing its investment in the development and maintenance of strategic partnerships to support great advocacy outcomes.

Council benefits from joint advocacy, which enables the delivery of a stronger message, grants access to a bigger pool of resources, and strengthens connections with key decision-makers.

Council regularly advocates through regional partnerships such as M9, Committee for Melbourne, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), the Association of Bayside Municipalities (ABM) and with our neighbouring councils. This provides an avenue for collective advocacy and broadens the voices heard by the government.

Council also works with subject-specific regional level partners, such as:

- **South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA)**, which advocates to deliver regional climate change projects that benefit over one million residents in southeast Melbourne
- **Metropolitan Transport Forum**, which advocates for better transport on behalf of over four million residents

Working in partnership with these networks provides an overlap on policy requests, strengthening its political imperative and provides a compelling case to support.

The Advocacy and Partnerships team conducts regular membership reviews to ensure we are maximising Council’s memberships and the advocacy benefits they provide.

Advocacy Networks

Local

- Local cultural organisations
- Traders and Trader Associations
- Resident Groups and Associations
- Sporting Clubs and Associations
- Advisory Committees
- Fishermans Bend Taskforce

Regional

- M9
- Committee for Melbourne
- South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCA)
- Association of Bayside Municipalities
- Inner Metropolitan Partnership
- Metropolitan Transport Forum

State

- State Members of Parliament (Lower and Upper House MP's)
- State Government Ministers / Premier of Victoria
- Victorian Government Departments
- Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)
- Sports and Recreation Victoria
- Creative Victoria
- Visit Victoria
- Development Victoria
- South East Water
- Local Government Victoria
- VLGA
- Victoria Police

Federal

- Federal Members of Parliament
- Senators for Victoria
- Federal Government Ministers
- Prime Minister of Australia
- Federal Government Departments
- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)



Australia Post site, Port Melbourne

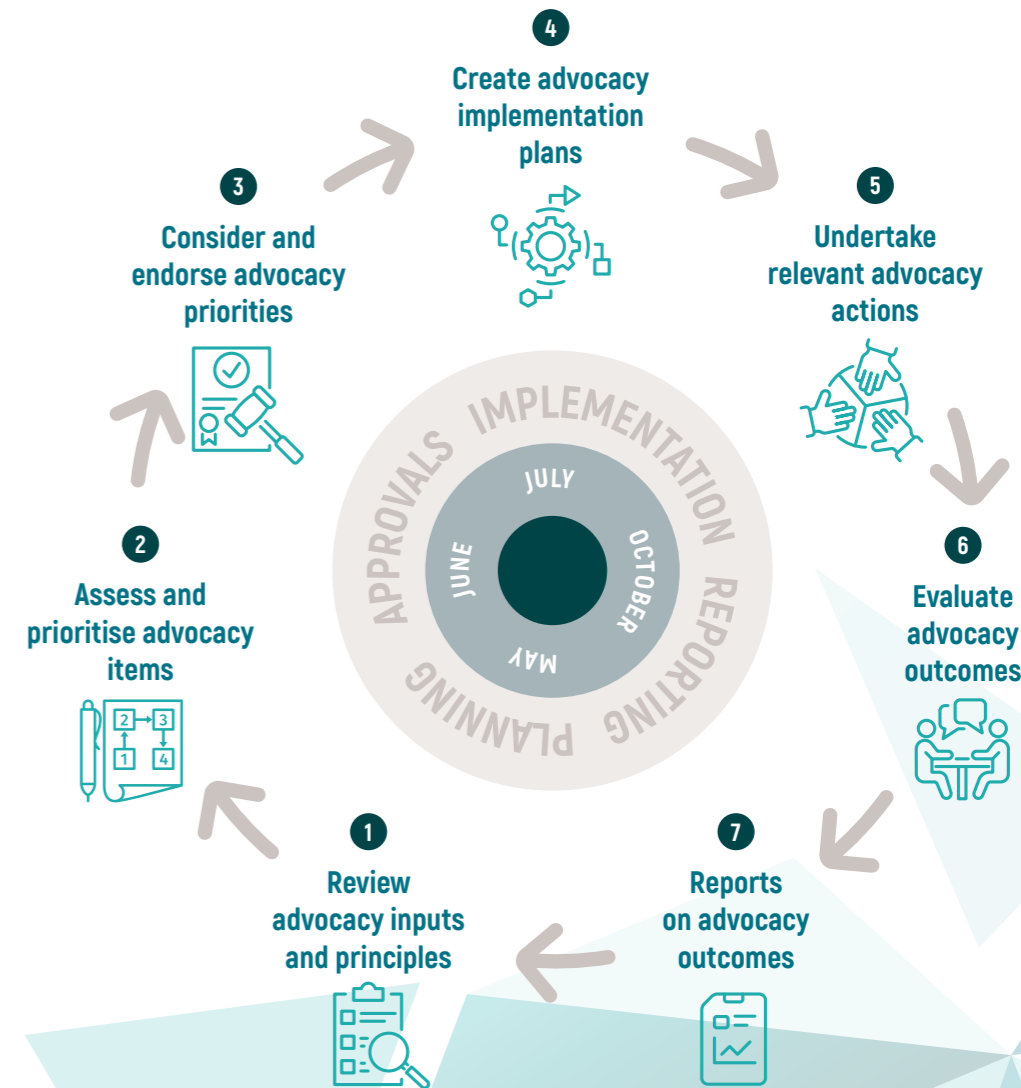


Middle Park foreshore

City of Port Phillip Advocacy Framework

City of Port Phillip Advocacy Cycle

The Advocacy Cycle provides an overview of the various stage-gates and touchpoints officers, community and council have in influencing the advocacy priorities. Noting that advocacy opportunities arise all the time, new items can be picked up at any time, and will be included for review as part of the following reporting cycle.



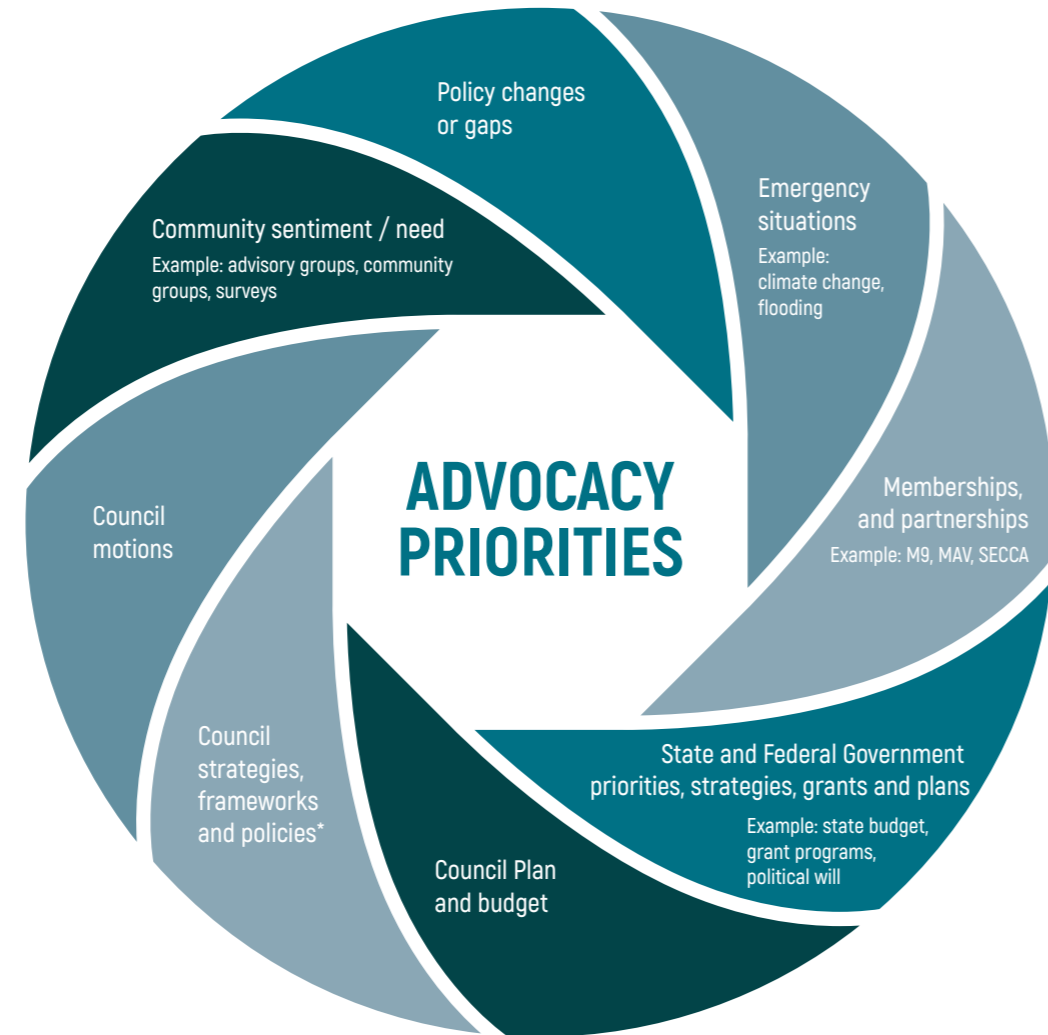
STAGE 1:

Review advocacy inputs

New opportunities are presented daily as advocacy opportunities, including many high quality and reasonable proposals. Our advocacy priorities are informed by a range of factors, including community feedback, our existing strategies and evidence and data that underpins the need for advocacy.

Council officers to review existing advocacy priorities and undertake an environmental scan of advocacy inputs, to determine potential advocacy items.

Some examples of the strategic inputs that influence advocacy priorities, are listed here:



*See Appendices, page 22



South Melbourne Market

Photography Simon Shiff

STAGE 2:

Assess and prioritise advocacy items

Council must prioritise resources effectively, ensuring they are used to their maximum potential to offer the greatest likelihood for positive change.

In order to achieve this, Council uses a structured prioritisation process to determine its advocacy priorities. This prioritisation process considers advocacy priorities against Council’s advocacy principles to develop a three-tiered advocacy system.

Advocacy Principles:

Evidence-Based	Council’s advocacy actions are based on the Council Plan, Council’s policy and strategy positions and supported by evidence and data (with a clear ask).
Collaborative	Where possible, Council will take a partnership approach. Council will work to identify key government and external stakeholders and maintain existing networks that support our advocacy goals.
Apolitical	Council is apolitical in our advocacy and work with all sides of politics to achieve strong outcomes for the community.
Strategic	Council takes a strategic approach to advocacy, that seeks to be innovative, aligns with government interests and plans, and achieves long-term benefits for the greatest number of people in the community.
Transparent	Council is open and transparent in our advocacy objectives, including our engagement with the community and annual review of advocacy priorities.
Leadership	Council will provide the community with leadership in representing agreed advocacy priorities that reflects the interests of the community.

The tiered system determines the resources dedicated to each priority to best guide Council efforts to achieve an outcome.

STAGE 3:

Consider and endorse advocacy priorities

Each year, Council officers will prepare a list of prioritised advocacy items for consideration and endorsement by executive and Councillors.

The proposal will be presented to Council between June and July each year.

This allows advocacy priorities to consider the outcome of federal and state elections, Council budgets, and alignment with grant funding opportunities and Council’s membership review.

In addition to the above, advocacy items can be added out of cycle, on the condition that it meets relevant assessment criteria. Continued advocacy on these items will be reviewed at annual Council advocacy priority reviews in June each year.



Photography Marcus Byrne

STAGE 4:

Advocacy implementation plan

Council will map an advocacy plan for each advocacy item. The level of detail and tactical planning will be considered in congruence with resourcing capacity. For example, higher priority advocacy items will include more detailed advocacy plans.

Priority Level	Example
Tier 1 Highest Priority	A new facility has been designated as a 'Tier 1' priority, following its assessment through Council's advocacy matrix. This facility requires millions to build, and the advocacy request is that the state and federal governments contribute to funding the project. The Advocacy and Partnership team will develop a tailored advocacy plan, determining the relevant actions and response required to deliver the Council priority. Council will develop a holistic campaign which may include letters to the Premier and/or relevant Ministers, media news stories, updates to our website, Mayoral advocacy, meetings with government officials, coordination with local partners to apply pressure to government, along with many other opportunities.
Tier 2 Medium Priority	A project has been designated as a 'Tier 2' priority, following its assessment through Council's advocacy matrix. Similar to a 'Tier 1' priority, Council will correspond with appropriate Ministers and request meetings. In regular Mayoral meetings with local Members of Parliament, Council may raise this priority to work towards outcomes. Council will also continue to work with state and federal government agencies to progress consideration of 'Tier 2' priorities in the budget process.
Tier 3 Low Priority	A proposal has been designated as a 'Tier 3' priority, following its assessment. The Advocacy and Partnership team will correspond with the Minister to bring attention to the priority. There is also the possibility of inclusion as an agenda item in Members of Parliament, Ministerial and Departmental meetings. This priority is the lowest resourced.

STAGE 5:

Undertake relevant advocacy action

Council to implement advocacy action plans for each advocacy item, tracking actions and progress as they occur via an advocacy register.

STAGE 6:

Review outcomes and modify plans as required

Council priorities are regularly evaluated and reassessed to ensure a fresh approach is adopted in pursuing Council priorities. Regular evaluation gives Council the ability to confirm whether its priorities remain important for Councillors, the Executive Leadership team and the community.

Evaluation will occur on an ongoing basis through the delivery of campaigns. Responsive evaluation and a change to campaign delivery, if required, may be influenced by a certain advocacy outcome, an unforeseen community request, a political event, a significant change in political policy, or a change of funding and service models, amongst others.

Further, it takes into consideration factors such as the adequacy of Council's advocacy hitherto, level of government interest and alignment, and the possibility of new grant programs and funding opportunities.

STAGE 7:

Reporting

Regular reporting on priorities is a key feature of Council's advocacy. The delivery of a transparent advocacy approach builds trust and confidence in Council as a proactive advocate for the community. Success measures and indicators will be tracked during implementation.

Bi-annual (twice yearly) reports will be provided to the Executive Leadership team and Councillors for their review in June and November.

The June report will include:

- Summary of previous year
 - o A summary of Council's advocacy activities, campaigns and achievements.
 - o An assessment of key barriers to success and recommendations for improvement, where possible.
 - o An assessment of new and emerging issues and opportunities.

- Recommendations for advocacy priorities for the following year.
- In years where council elections occur, the June report will be brought forward, to avoid caretaker periods.
- The November report (mid-term progress report) will include:
 - An update on endorsed advocacy priorities, including tracking, what has been achieved and next steps.
 - Any additional advocacy priorities that have been adopted since previously reporting to Council.
 - A summary of Council's advocacy activities, campaigns and achievements.
 - An assessment of new and emerging issues and opportunities.

Council will also report any advocacy wins via our website, social media, news media stories, Divercity community e-newsletter, CEO Reports and Annual Reports.

Review of Advocacy Strategy

The Advocacy Strategy and Framework is to be reviewed every four years with the next review to take place in 2028.

Our current advocacy priorities, electorate boundaries, infrastructure projects and grants updates can be found on the City of Port Phillip website.

portphillip.vic.gov.au/advocacy

Appendices

City of Port Phillip Strategies and Plans

Examples of relevant Council Strategies and Plans include, but are not limited to:

- Council Plan 2021-2031
- Creative and Prosperous City Strategy 2023-2026
- Live Music Action Plan 2022
- Events Strategy 2023-2026
- Activating Laneways Strategy 2011
- Outdoor Events Policy 2023-2026
- Sport and Recreation Strategy 2015-2024
- Library Action Plan 2021-2026
- Accessibility Action Plan 2023-2025
- Community Engagement Policy 2021
- In Our Backyard - Growing Affordable Housing in Port Phillip 2015-2025
- LGBTIQ+ Action Plan 2023-2026
- Positive Ageing Policy 2023-2027
- Foreshore Management Plan 2012
- Act and Adapt, Sustainable Environment Strategy 2018-2028
- Move, Connect, Live Transport Strategy 2018-2028
- Don't Waste It! Waste Management Strategy 2022-2025



Point Ormond Reserve, playground and foreshore



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