

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

COUNCIL MEETING 5 JUNE 2024



Public Question Time

Questions from Isaac Hermann:

1. With regards to our heritage laneways, Council has an excellent set of guidelines. A few months ago, I met with a number of very polite and professional officers whom, even after many years of service were totally unfamiliar with Council policy and guidelines in this area. How did this state of affairs come to be? Who is responsible for Council officers in this area to be adequately informed? Why have they failed?

Response: *Council's heritage laneways guidelines are excellent, and despite being developed nearly 20 years ago (2004-2006) are still used by officers today when planning and scoping works in our laneways. At the Council meeting of 5 June, Isaac recalled meeting with officers in the field and expressed concerns that they didn't appear to have working knowledge of the guidelines. Thank you for your reflections on how polite and courteous the officers were, that is always pleasing to hear.*

The officers were onsite dealing with a situation of poor reinstatement by a utility provider. Unfortunately, this is a regular issue that we have to deal with. One of the officers who was in attendance has been with Council for 30 years. They were actually involved in the original preparation of the guidelines. I assure you that that officer is aware of the guidelines.

The senior officers in our infrastructure maintenance, civil construction and assets teams are aware of the guidelines and ensure that they are applied in planning and scoping works. Some of the officers in their teams, such as junior officers, may not be across the detail. It is the responsibility of supervisory staff to ensure that their staff are equipped with the knowledge of Council's policies, procedures, and guidelines. In response the concerns you have raised we have ensured that all staff, including those that are junior and those that are new to Council, are aware of the guidelines.

2. Our heritage zoned laneways are failing to criterion determined by asset engineering alone, with next to no consideration for heritage values, and specifically zero regard for original construction methods. Could Council provide a more balanced approach in this regard, with demonstrably more protection for our heritage in line with the Charter for Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance? Other agencies such as South East Water often conduct work in our laneways and are not required to work to any acceptable heritage standards. Their work devalues our neighbourhoods. Will Council officers, now that they are aware of council policy and guidelines, make an effort to advise and inspect and hold accountable outside agencies to the required standards?

Response: *Council developed the Heritage Kerbs, Channels & Laneways: History, Significance and Guidelines document in 2006 to identify significant kerbs, channels and laneways in the municipality and formulate policies to conserve and enhance their contribution. Most, if not all, of the City's significant kerbs, channels and laneways are protected by the heritage overlay at a precinct scale. Council's heritage advisors try to ensure that heritage significant bluestone and concrete kerbs and pitchers are conserved when dealing with heritage referrals for planning permit applications. Likewise, Council's property and assets department endeavour to ensure that Council's heritage significant assets are conserved in accordance with the Heritage Kerbs, Channels & Laneways document. The asset protection team works with private operators and other authorities to achieve this goal. Moreover, the team also tries to ensure that development and trees on private property do not impact the condition of Council's laneways. However, it is acknowledged that sometimes oversights can occur throughout the project management*

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lifecycle and any issues may not be identified until afterwards through the condition inspection program. Moreover, it is difficult to monitor the entire municipality for general compliance. That is why it is appreciated when members of the public bring these issues to our attention.

3. Will Council attend to these following heritage concerns that I have specifically reported:

- despite some recent repairs - the increasingly dilapidated state of the rotunda in the Clement Hodgkinson 1867 designed Alma Park?
- to reinstate the rare bluestone bollard in the laneway by Finn Barr, 155 Cecil St South Melbourne?

Response: *The property and assets department are aware of current state of the Alma Park rotunda and the bluestone bollards in South Melbourne. They will consider them as part of their renewal and minor capital works program.*

4. Following S E Water's mains water line renewal along Wave Street Elwood (c.2021) where they butchered the root system of significant gum tree – that resulted in major die back. This significant habitat tree was the subject of recent council discussions and subsequent pruning. Will Council hold S E Water accountable for the entailed works considering the decline and pending loss of this very significant and valuable tree?

Response: *With respect to the tree along Wave Street, Elwood, Council will need to investigate this further with South East Water's about their waterline renewal.*

Councillor Question Time

Question from Councillor Pearl:

Can Council officers provide a detailed update on the actions from the Council report 10.3 of December 6, 2023, specifically regarding the budget allocation needed to complete the works in Queens Lane and the reasons for the delay in signage installations?

Response:

An update on each of the actions endorsed from the Council Report is detailed below:

Queens Lane Towaway Powers

- *A formal submission has been made to DTP for towaway powers on Queens Lane.*
- *The Department of Transport has provided in principle support and officers are anticipating receiving formal approval from DTP shortly.*

Intersection Upgrades at Arthur/Leopold

- *Draft concept designs for both intersections have been prepared by officers and shared for internal consultation.*
- *Community Consultation on the finalised concept design is anticipated to occur in July/August 2024.*
- *Detailed Design is planned for 2024/25, with construction expected to commence in 2025/26.*

Kings Way Line Marking

- *A concept design has been prepared by officers.*
- *In principle support for the concept has been provided by DTP.*
- *Final design plans are currently being prepared for formal DTP approval.*

**Please note: Responses to any questions during Public Question Time and Councillor Question Time which were responded to during the meeting are included in the minutes of that meeting.*

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- *Community notification to be undertaken once approval is received, and works schedule confirmed.*
- *Delivery scheduled is for 2024/25 FY, timing is dependent on DTP approval, contractor availability and scheduling considerations to minimise traffic disruptions.*
- *The budget allocation for the line marking works at the intersection of Kings Way and Queens Lane is \$80k. (Includes contingency)*

40km/h Repeater Signs

- *The investigation phase has been completed.*
- *A work order has been issued.*
- *Installation of 40km/h repeater signs has been successfully carried out.*

Question from Councillor Pearl:

What plans are in place to ensure coordination of traffic management activities in and around Queens Lane, considering the high volume of new construction projects in the area? Additionally, what information is the Council providing to residents regarding traffic movements from the construction sites?

Response: *Council's Community Amenity Local Law (2023) in conjunction with Procedures and Protocols Manual, has a number of provisions to manage construction, including permitting the occupations of roads, lane/road closures, and managing the amenity on building sites, including construction hours. Council's Development Permitting officers work with our Traffic Engineers and directly with developers, to ensure all conflicting sites are coordinated, to minimise disruption on affected residents and businesses. We recognise the importance of coordinating traffic management where clusters of large developments occur, such as Queens Lane and maintain an active major projects register to manage any lane or road closure requests. Council's Major Projects Permitting Officer proactively engages with developers, nearby residents and businesses, to manage any conflicts and concerns during the construction process and provides consistent, clear and timely advice. In instances where a resident's vehicle access is being restricted by construction, a lane or road closure permits issued under Local Law requires written notification be provided by the permit-holder, to the affected residents.*

Item 9.1 State of Children's Services 3rd Annual Report

Question from Councillor Pearl:

The report refers to the 'St Kilda Mums' group. I'm just wondering how much of the St Kilda Mum's operation is still in the City of Port Phillip, given that they recently moved. The report relies quite heavily on this.

Response: *As per the report that Council acquires baby clothing and items for families in need through St Kilda Mums with 54 orders in 2023, a significant increase on 2022's nine orders.*

St Kilda Mums is now a large organisation – having merged with Geelong Mums and Eureka Mums and known as Our Village – more information can be found at: [Our Village](#)

There is no further Council activity that I can report on, noting that it is more than likely they are supporting other organisations and therefore individuals in the municipality. I can also

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confirm that the Family Youth and Children's Department does not have any sort of funding agreement in place with them.

From the Annual State of Children's Services Report:

'St Kilda Mums was established in 2009, starting from a mother's house in St Kilda, who decided to rehome near-new baby clothing and goods donated by parents for families who might need them. St Kilda Mums is now operating at a large warehouse in Clayton with the support of over 400 new volunteers in 2023.

In their 2022/2023 Annual Report³⁵, St Kilda Mums reports rehoming a total of 65,940 items valued at \$7,515,788 across Melbourne.

Council acquires baby clothing and items for families in need through St Kilda Mums with 54 orders in 2023, a significant increase on 2022's nine orders. This strongly indicates the importance of organisations such as St Kilda Mums to provide additional material and clothing for new parents and families in financial struggles.

In 2023 one of our Social Workers participated in the St Kilda Mums social media campaign, sharing through video their experience of how the organisation has made a change in the lives of countless families. Council is grateful for the assistance provided by St Kilda Mums and look forward to their continued support in our community.'