

12.5 Quarterly Advocacy Report - September 2024

Directorate	People, Partnerships and Performance
Director	Georgie Hill
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Attachment(s)	Nil

Purpose

For Council to note the major advocacy-related developments from June to September 2024, as outlined in this report.

Officer Recommendation

That Council notes this quarterly advocacy report for June and September 2024.

Background**Brimbank's Advocacy Priorities**

Council's advocacy priorities are aligned to the Council Plan Strategic Directions and are detailed in the Brimbank Advocacy Plan 2023-2025. These priorities are outlined below along with their level of importance.

- Transforming Brimbank – Gold
- Mental Health – Gold
- Road Infrastructure – Silver
- Climate Emergency – Silver
- Addressing Unemployment – Bronze
- Housing and Homelessness - Bronze
- Melbourne Airport Third Runway - Maintain Influence
- Gambling Harm - Maintain Influence
- Major Parks - Maintain Influence
- Libraries - Maintain Influence
- Government Burden on Council - Maintain Influence

Major advocacy developments and highlights are reported to Council each quarter.

Matters for Consideration

The whole-of-Council advocacy highlights from early June 2024 to early September 2024 are summarised below.

2024 ALGA National General Assembly

In early July 2024, Brimbank participated in the National General Assembly of the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) in Canberra. At ALGA, Council moved two successful notices of motion calling on the Australian Government to increase its level of funding to upgrade major highways and to provide greater support to the unemployed by increasing JobSeeker and Youth Allowance payments and by establishing an 'Economic Inclusion' fund to create local job opportunities for local people.

The trip to Canberra was also a good opportunity for Council representatives to meet with various Federal MPs from both of the major parties. This included an important meeting with the Hon. Catherine King, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional

Development and Local Government. At this meeting, Mayor Rasic raised a number of Council's major advocacy priorities, including the Melbourne Airport Rail, the development of the Sunshine Precinct, Melbourne Airport's proposed third runway and Council's Fix the Calder campaign.

A Delegates Report of the trip to Canberra was endorsed at the previous Council Meeting on 20 August 2024.

Federal Election Advocacy Brochure

Last month, Council approved a new advocacy brochure ahead of the 2025 Federal Election. The brochure outlines a number of election commitments that we will be seeking from the parties and candidates contesting the Federal Election. These asks are relevant at a Federal Government level and largely align with the top priorities identified in the Brimbank Advocacy Plan 2023-2025. The are:

- Transform Sunshine into a Superhub
- Build the Calder Park Drive interchange
- A more sustainable Brimbank
 - o Boost canopy cover
 - o Energy upgrades to low-income households to reduce Carbon emissions
 - o Sustainability and Circular Economy Hub at Sunshine Energy Park
- Reducing unemployment in Brimbank
 - o Transform the Brimbank Learning Futures facility into a suburban study hub
- Improving Brimbank's community facilities
 - o Upgrades to Sports facilities
 - o Redevelopment of St Albans Library

Melbourne Airport Rail

Last November, and following strong advocacy by Brimbank, the Australian Government recommitted to funding the construction of the Melbourne Airport Rail (MAR). Earlier this year, and in response to the previous dispute between the Victorian Government and the Melbourne Airport operator about the positioning of the proposed Melbourne Airport train station, the Australian Government appointed a mediator, Mr Neil Scales OBE, to help facilitate a way forward. The Victorian Government's preference is for an above-ground station while Melbourne Airport had been calling for the station to be built underground. In his report, released in late June, Mr Scales recommended against an underground station unless there is a comprehensive business case showing that it stacks up.

The report also recommended new modelling to determine how quickly the Tullamarine Freeway will become congested, indicating that MAR is increasingly becoming an urgent project. The Melbourne Airport operator subsequently agreed to proceed with an above-ground station. Despite this, the Victorian Government has insisted on a four-year delay. Council has been advocating for this delayed timeline to be reconsidered so that the project can resume as soon as possible.

Sunshine Precinct

As a result of the mediation undertaken by Mr Scales, it was recommended that "*work continues at Sunshine Station to transform this into the major transport hub it was planned to be.*" The mediation also found that this would be a "*no regrets*" strategy due to both the benefits and the work already completed. These findings pave the way for the development of the Sunshine Precinct to be undertaken as the first stage of Melbourne Airport Rail project.

The matter was raised by Mayor Rasic with Minister King during their meeting in Canberra in early July. Brimbank subsequently welcomed Minister King's media announcement in early August that the Australian Government "*will do the work at*

Sunshine Station, making that a hub" and that it is "working with the Victorian Government on that".

Mental Health Social Inclusion Action Groups

In early August, Victorian Minister for Mental Health, Ms Ingrid Stitt, announced that Brimbank will be included amongst the next tranche of five LGAs where the State Government will establish Mental Health Social Inclusion Action Groups (SIAGs). Council has been advocating for a Social Inclusion Action Group in Brimbank since the release of our current Advocacy Plan, where Mental Health sits as a Gold Priority.

The establishment of a SIAG in Brimbank was raised by both the previous Mayor and current the Mayor with all State MPs that they met with, including Minister Stitt. The topic also featured in our Victorian Government 'Funding Priorities' brochure that was shared with the Minister and all local State MPs earlier this year. In addition, Brimbank moved a successful motion on SIAGs at the MAV State Council Meeting held in May of this year.

LeadWest Roundtable with Treasurer Pallas

On 5 September 2024, LeadWest hosted a roundtable discussion at the Holiday Inn in Werribee with Victorian Treasurer the Hon Tim Pallas. The roundtable was also attended by Dylan Wight MP and Steve McGhie MP. Brimbank was represented by Cr Virginia Tachos and Acting Director City Futures Leanne Deans. This event was a great opportunity for LeadWest to have an early conversation with the Treasurer ahead of the 2025-2026 State Budget. Topics discussed included funding for the Sunshine Precinct and the Melbourne Airport Rail.

Community Engagement

This report is consistent with the policy, evidence and current positions of Council, widely informed by community engagement and insight and the Brimbank Advocacy Plan 2023-2025.

Resource And Risk Implications

Resource requirements can be met within the Annual Budget 2024/2025.

There are no Community, Environmental, Financial, Regulatory or Safety risks identified.

Legislation/Council Plan/Policy Context

This report supports the Council Plan 2021-2025 strategic direction and objective of:

1. People and Community - A welcoming, safe and supported community - An inclusive place for all

- Wellbeing and Belonging - Responsive services that support mental and physical wellbeing

2. Places and Spaces - Liveable and connected neighbourhoods that support healthy and sustainable futures - A green place for all

- Liveable and Connected - Inviting and liveable spaces and facilities, connected so people can get around

3. Opportunity and Prosperity - A future focused, transforming city where all have opportunities to learn and earn - A prosperous place for all

- Growing and Transforming - Optimise community opportunities through infrastructure innovation and investment

4. Leadership and Governance - A high performing organisation that enacts the vision and decisions of Council through the delivery of quality and innovative services - A fairer place for all

- High Performing and Accountable - Our workforce strive to enhance services and liveability for the Brimbank community.

This report complies with the priorities identified in the Brimbank Advocacy Plan 2023-2025.

Council officers contributing to the preparation and approval of this report, have no conflicts of interests to declare.