Department of Transport and Planning

GPO Box 2392
Melbourne, Victoria 3001 Australia

Ref: BORG-1-26-5754

Mr Tim Hellsten
Lead Chair
VPA Projects Standing Advisory Committee
Planning Panels Victoria
Via email: office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Hellsten

DRAFT AMENDMENT C109MOOR– MERRIMU PRECINCT STRUCTURE PLAN - VPA PROJECTS STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE REFERRAL

I refer to draft Amendment C109moor to the Moorabool Planning Scheme (draft Amendment), which facilitates the use and development of land within the Merrimu precinct primarily for residential use, generally in accordance with the Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) and Development Contributions Plan (DCP).

On 4 February 2026, the Minister for Planning approved the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), which is now part of the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), to use a streamlined planning process to progress the draft amendment and undertake informal public consultation about the matter and delegated to the Head of Spatial Planning the power to refer any unresolved submissions directly to the VPA Projects Standing Advisory Committee (Committee).

Between 6 March 2026 and 9 April 2026, DTP undertook a targeted public consultation process for the PSP, DCP, NVPP and the associated draft amendment. A total of 84 (inclusive of three duplicate) submissions have been received.

Referral

In accordance with clause 12 of the terms of reference for the Committee (July 2020) and delegation provided to the VPA (now DTP), I am writing to refer ‘Key Issues’ identified in **Table 1** below for advice and recommendations. These Key Issues have been derived from the unresolved submissions to the PSP and associated draft planning scheme amendment.

DTP notes that within the referred submissions, not all the issues raised by submitters fall into the identified ‘Key Issues’ at **Table 1**. The Committee is to limit itself to considering only those parts of the referred submissions that are relevant to the ‘Key Issues’ identified in **Table 1** of this letter.

DTP will continue seeking to resolve specific issues or matters that have not been referred as ‘Key Issues’ to the Committee directly with submitters.

Matters raised in submissions that have not been identified and referred as ‘Key Issues’ are those DTP is confident will be resolved outside of the Committee process or where DTP has formed a clear position that does not require the Committee’s consideration.

Table 1 - Key Issues

Key Issues	Advice Sought
Bushfire	Please advise whether • The precinct is suitable as a growth area having regard to the regional bushfire risk and State bushfire policy noting the time elapsed since the publication of the *Bacchus Marsh Urban Growth Framework* (2018). • If the proposed bushfire controls are appropriate and proportionate to the level of risk.
Transport network	Please advise whether • The transport network identified in the PSP is strategically justified and sufficient to support the future development of the precinct – specifically: - RD-02/IN-03, RD-03/IN-02 and RD-09/IN-08 is adequate to support the anticipated traffic volumes and safely traverse the escarpment. - RD-07/IN-09 is adequate to support the anticipated traffic volumes, safely traverse the escarpment and adequately minimises impacts to the Hopetoun cemetery. • The location and application of the proposed PAO to facilitate the timely provision of transport infrastructure is appropriate.
Development Contributions Plan (DCP)	Please advise whether • The rates adopted to cost the DCP projects identified in the transport network section of this referral letter are appropriate for the regional context. • The DCP land costs are appropriate. • The inclusion and apportionment of IN-11 is strategically justified and appropriate.
Precinct boundary, density and interface treatments	Please advise whether • The precinct boundary is strategically justified having regard to submissions requesting landholdings being within the precinct. • The proposed residential densities along Flanagans Drive and Streeton Drive are strategically justified. • The precinct adequately provides interface treatments for adjoining residential development along Possumtail Run.

Committee Process

Without limiting its powers under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (Vic), including the power to regulate its own proceedings, DTP encourages the Committee to consider adopting the following procedures to provide an efficient and timely process for the assessment of the referred issues:

a) Specifying a time limit for submitters seeking to be heard;

b) Considering referred Key Issues on the papers, through round table discussions or forums, or through a more conventional Hearing process, as appropriate;

c) Regulating the duration of evidence in chief to balance efficiency and fairness;

d) Limiting cross examination to matters which are of interest to the Committee; and

e) Directing the submitters to focus preparation of submissions, evidence and appointment of experts only on the Key Issues DTP has requested your advice on and raised in **Table 1**.

The supporting documents required by clause 13 of the terms of reference are enclosed via a ShareFile link in the accompanying email.

DTP requests the Committee confirm the following dates:

- A Directions Hearing on 15 December 2026
- A Hearing commencing week of 12 April 2027

Enclosed are all referred submissions, and a submissions summary table, which identifies the Key Issues within unresolved submissions and DTP's current response to submitters.

Please be advised that the public release of the Committee's Report will be at the discretion of the Minister for Planning.

If you would like further information, please email Dean Rochfort, Executive Director New Communities at [redacted]

Yours sincerely,



Emily Mottram (DTP)

Acting Head Spatial Planning & VPA CEO

Date: 18/11/2026