Planning Panels Victoria
Department of Transport and Planning

1 Spring Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
GPO Box 2392
Melbourne, Victoria 3001
Telephone (03) 5381 9457

19 November 2026

Dear Submitter

VPA Projects Standing Advisory Committee Referral 19:
Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan and Development Contributions Plan

We are writing to you because you made a submission to the above matter. The Department of Transport and Planning, New Communities (formerly known as the Victorian Planning Authority) has referred unresolved submissions to the VPA Projects Standing Advisory Committee (the Committee) for advice and recommendations. The referral letter to the Committee dated 18 November 2026 is attached and includes a table of Key Issues. The Committee will only consider those parts of referred submissions that are relevant to the Key Issues identified in the table.

Tim Hellsten (Chair), Sally Conway and John Hartigan are nominated as the Committee. You can read more about the Committee including member biographies on the Planning Panels Victoria website.

This letter:

- tells you about the Public Hearing process
- tells you what you need to do if you want to participate in the Public Hearing
- explains how we will use information we collect
- sets out draft directions for the Hearing.

The Amendment

Draft Moorabool Planning Scheme Amendment C109moor (the draft Amendment) proposes to:

- introduce the Urban Growth Zone into the Moorabool Planning Scheme
- rezone land in the Merrimu precinct to the Urban Growth Zone Schedule 1
- incorporate the Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan, Development Contributions Plan, and Native Vegetation Precinct Plan to guide development of the precinct and contribute to funding essential infrastructure required, including connector roads, arterial roads and community facilities.

The Precinct Structure Plan proposes to facilitate the development of approximately 8,000 homes and support a new community of around 24,000 residents and fund the delivery of essential infrastructure such as new arterial road intersections, network of local parks and land for community facilities. You can read more about the draft Amendment online here: https://vpa.vic.gov.au/project/merrimu/

The Minister for Planning is the intended planning authority for the draft Amendment.

Privacy Statement
Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be protected under the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. It will only be used or disclosed to appropriate Ministerial, Statutory Authority, or departmental staff in regard to the purpose for which it was provided, unless required or authorised by law. Enquiries about access to information about you held by the Department should be directed to the Privacy Coordinator, Department of Transport and Planning, GPO Box 2392, East Melbourne, Victoria 3001.

VICTORIA State Government

The Hearing process

The public Committee process includes a Directions Hearing and a main Hearing.

The Committee will:

- consider submitters in an independent forum
- be informal and not like a court
- give fair, unbiased advice to the Department of Transport and Planning and the Minister for Planning about the draft Amendment.

Submissions and other information presented throughout the process, including the Hearing, **will be treated as public documents**. Please carefully read the attached *Privacy Collection Notice*.

Directions Hearing

The purpose of the Directions Hearing is for parties to introduce themselves, discuss the process and make arrangements for the main Hearing.

You should attend the Directions Hearing if you:

- are new to the Committee process and/or wish to participate in the Hearing
- have questions about the Committee process or wish to raise procedural issues.

At the Directions Hearing, the Committee will:

- give directions about exchanging information before the Hearing and the conduct of the Hearing
- consider Hearing times and venue and site inspections
- answer questions people have about the Committee process including the Hearing.

The Committee will issue written directions after considering all requests to be heard and any additional matters raised at the Directions Hearing.

The Directions Hearing will be held in person:
10am, Tuesday, 15 December 2026
Flex by ISPT - Prahran/Brighton Room
Ground Floor, 500 Bourke Street, Melbourne

Alternatively, you can join online by video using Microsoft Teams:
https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/411920254623931?p=J1lRdG8XuX0i3nojeB
Meeting ID: 411 920 254 623 931
Passcode: 6kw6mV3Y
Or dial in (audio only): Call +61 3 9070 4463 and enter phone conference ID 175694290#

Hearing

The purpose of the main Hearing is for people to speak to their written submission and to hear from the Department of Transport and Planning. The Hearing will start in the week of 12 April 2026 and may run for up to three weeks depending on the length of submissions and evidence from the Department of Transport and Planning and parties. The Hearing is open for anyone to observe.

The Committee will consider all referred written submissions when preparing its report, including those from submitters who do not attend the Hearing.

Key dates

The Key Information attached to this letter includes a list of key dates for circulating information in the leadup to the Hearing. If you wish to comment on the key dates or any other matters but are unable to attend the Directions Hearing, you can provide comments in writing to office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au by Wednesday, 9 December 2026.

If you wish to be involved in the Hearing

Please complete the online request to be heard form by 12 noon on Wednesday 9 December 2026 if:

- you wish to be involved in the Hearing
- you do not wish to speak but would like a copy of the timetable and directions.

Notes on completing the online request to be heard form are attached.

Further Information

Please find attached to this letter:

- Guidance on completing the online request to be heard form
- Key information including proposed dates and directions, more about how like submissions will be treated, and the Foley's List Legal Assistance Service
- The *Privacy Collection Notice* which explains how your submission will be used by the Committee.

Further information including the *What is a Panel?* guide, *Guide to the Public Hearing* and *Frequently Asked Questions* are available at:

www.planningpanels.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources

If you need a paper copy of these documents or if you have any other questions, please contact Planning Panels Victoria at office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



TIM HELLSTEN
Committee Chair

Completing the Request to be Heard Form

VPA Projects Standing Advisory Committee Referral 19:
Merrimu Precinct Structure Plan and Development Contributions Plan

When completing the online request to be heard form, please note the following details.

When will the Hearing be held?

The expected hearing dates are between 12 April and 30 April 2026.

What if I have availability issues during the expected hearing dates?

You can tell us when you are not available.

The Committee will accommodate your availability where possible.

Time required to present your submission

You will be allocated 10 minutes for your submission if this field is left blank.

Experts

An expert gives evidence in a field of expertise and must prepare an expert statement.

If you propose to call experts, you must:

- provide details of all experts on the request to be heard form – this includes their name, organisation, and field of expertise
- circulate expert reports at the time directed by the Committee before the Hearing.

Please note that it is critical the Committee receives this information about experts on time as it assists in planning the draft timetable for the Hearing before the Directions Hearing.

Experts may be directed to participate in a conference of experts and contribute to preparing a joint experts report.

Participants in the Hearing can generally cross-examine experts.

What happens after I complete the form?

If you complete this form, a letter with directions and a timetable for the Hearing will be emailed to you after the Directions Hearing. Your name and email address will be added to the Distribution List for circulating information, including reports and submissions for the Hearing unless you tell us otherwise.

What if I do not have an email address?

Please contact Planning Panels Victoria on (03) 5381 9457 as soon as possible if you need a form mailed to you. A paper copy of documents such as the timetable will be mailed to submitters who provide a postal address.

How will my contact information be used?

We will use your contact address to contact you. We will provide your email or postal address to participants in the Hearing so that they can share reports and submissions unless you tell us otherwise.

Access requirements

Please contact PPV with any access requirements. Some Hearings are at PPV, some are at other locations (for example, local Council offices) and some are held online. PPV Hearing Rooms are equipped with a hearing loop, and a laptop and projector if required. If the Hearing is held at another location, we may need to ensure access requirements can be met.

Summary of proposed key dates and directions

The following dates are proposed:

Time	Date	Documents to be circulated and other matters
12 noon	Friday, 15 January 2027	Expert details
12 noon	Friday, 29 January 2027	Department of Transport and Planning must provide a submitter location map to the Committee only and site inspection itinerary
12 noon	Monday, 8 March 2027	Department of Transport and Planning background and context submission
12 noon	Monday, 22 March 2027	Department of Transport and Planning expert statement(s)
12 noon	Wednesday, 24 March 2027	Department of Transport and Planning 'Version 1' of the Project documentation
12 noon	Monday, 29 March 2027	Other parties' expert statement(s)
12 noon	Monday, 5 April 2027	Joint experts report(s) (if required)
12 noon	Thursday, 8 April 2027	Any supplementary submission from a party not appearing at the Hearing
12 noon	Friday, 9 April 2027	Documents or material to be presented on Day 1 of the Hearing including opening submissions
10:00am	Monday, 12 April 2027	**Hearing commences**
12 noon	TBC	Comments on final drafting

How 'like submissions' will be treated

In determining whether submissions are like submissions, the Committee may have regard to any of the following (section 158C(2) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*):

- whether the issues raised in the submissions are the same or substantially the same
- whether the wording of the submissions is the same or substantially the same
- any other relevant matter.

Submitters who prepared like submissions should note:

- if a lead submitter is designated, the Committee will only be required to hear from the lead submitter
- if no lead submitter is designated because no person consents to being designated, the Committee is not required to hear from any submitters who prepared submissions that are the same or substantially the same.

Refer to sections 158C, 158D and 158E of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Foley's List Legal Assistance Service

The Legal Assistance Service, offered by Foley's List barristers, offers low-cost or no-cost legal support to eligible submitters in Planning Panel Victoria hearings. Available to individuals and community groups, the service offers legal advice and representation to help participants navigate PPV processes (subject to barrister availability). Assistance ranges from preliminary advice to full representation, with fees reduced or waived. To participate, submitters must meet eligibility criteria. More information about the service is available on the PPV website, including information on who to contact at Foley's List to apply for the service.

Planning Panels Victoria Privacy Notice

Your personal information will be collected during this Committee process for the purpose of documenting your views about the draft Amendment, advising the Department of Transport and Planning and the Minister for Planning about the draft Amendment, and communicating with you throughout the Committee process.

While the Committee process is underway

Natural justice for all participants and transparency are important parts of the Committee process. The Committee may conduct any Hearing it holds in public and will keep a public record of the material provided to the Committee. Planning Panels Victoria (PPV) may:

- provide a copy of your material with all contact details to Council, government agencies and other parties to the Hearing
- provide a copy of your material to any other person who requests it (your personal information will be removed first)
- provide a copy of your material to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) if needed for preparing Ministerial briefings
- publicly display a copy of your material in the PPV Office or Hearing room
- direct that a copy of your material be publicly displayed in the relevant local council office or DTP regional office.

Hearings

The Committee may conduct a Hearing, either in person or using video conferencing. Hearings by video conference have special privacy requirements. If you choose to participate in the Hearing, you should be aware:

- a link to the Hearing will be published on the internet, and third parties will be able to join the Hearing and observe
- the Committee may broadcast the Hearing live on the internet.

The Committee may make a recording of the Hearing and may provide a copy of any recording to any person who requests it. Where Hearings are recorded, generally audio only is recorded (not video).

The Committee can hear submissions or accept material on a confidential basis, provided this would be fair to the other parties to the Hearing. If you want to make your submissions or provide material to the Committee confidentially, you will need to ask permission from the Committee Chair and provide reasons why the Committee should treat your submissions or material confidentially.

The Committee report

The Committee's report can be made public at the discretion of the Minister for Planning. The Committee's report will include a list of the names of submitters and a list of the names of the parties to the Hearing. It may include direct quotes from submitters.

After the Committee has reported

When the Committee has submitted its report, your material will be removed from public display.

Requesting copies

If you would like a copy of any submissions or material collected by the Committee, or a copy of any recording the Committee makes of the Hearing, make a request to PPV by email at office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au before the Committee submits its report. If the Committee has reported, you should submit your request to the DTP Freedom of Information and Privacy Unit at foi.unit@transport.vic.gov.au

If you have any concerns about how your submission will be used, please contact PPV on (03) 8572 7999.

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