

Referral 7: Frankston Activity Centre
Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee Report

12 November 2024

Planning Panels Victoria acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People as the traditional custodians of the land on which our office is located. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Planning and Environment Act 1987

Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee Report

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12 November 2024



Kathy Mitchell AM, Chair



Peter Edwards, Member



Peter Elliott, Member



Jo Harrison, Member



Simon Shiel, Member

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Glossary and abbreviations

Activity Centre	Frankston Activity Centre
Activity Centre Plan	Draft Frankston Activity Centre Plan, VPA, 2024
ACP	Activity Centre Program
BFO	Built Form Overlay
City of Centres Report	<i>City of Centres: Development of typology-based built form controls</i> , Sheppard & Cull, May 2024
Committee	Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee
Council	Frankston City Council
DTP	Department of Transport and Planning
Minister	Minister for Planning
PE Act	<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>
Planning Scheme	Frankston Planning Scheme
VPA	Victorian Planning Authority
WCZ	Walkable Catchment Zone

Overview

Referral summary

Referral	7: Frankston
Subject land	See Figure 1
Referred submissions and information	See Appendix C
Referred issues	<p>Advice sought on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - change to the extent of the proposed walkable catchment boundary <p>Advice not to be provided on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - any other matter

Committee

The Committee	Kathy Mitchell AM (Chair), Peter Edwards, Peter Elliott, Jo Harrison, Simon Shiel
Supported by	Georgia Brodrick
Site inspection	Unaccompanied, 1 November 2024
Date of this report	12 November 2024

1 Introduction

1.1 Terms of Reference and referral letter

The Minister for Planning (Minister) appointed the Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee (Committee) on 22 August 2024. The purpose of the Committee is set out in its Terms of Reference dated 22 August 2024 (see Appendix A):

... provide timely advice to the Minister for Planning on specific matters referred to it relating to strategic and built form work undertaken in relation to the [Activity Centres Program] ACP to inform the preparation of clear new planning controls in and around the 10 activity centres identified in *Victoria's Housing Statement, The decade ahead, 2024-2034* to deliver 60,000 more homes.

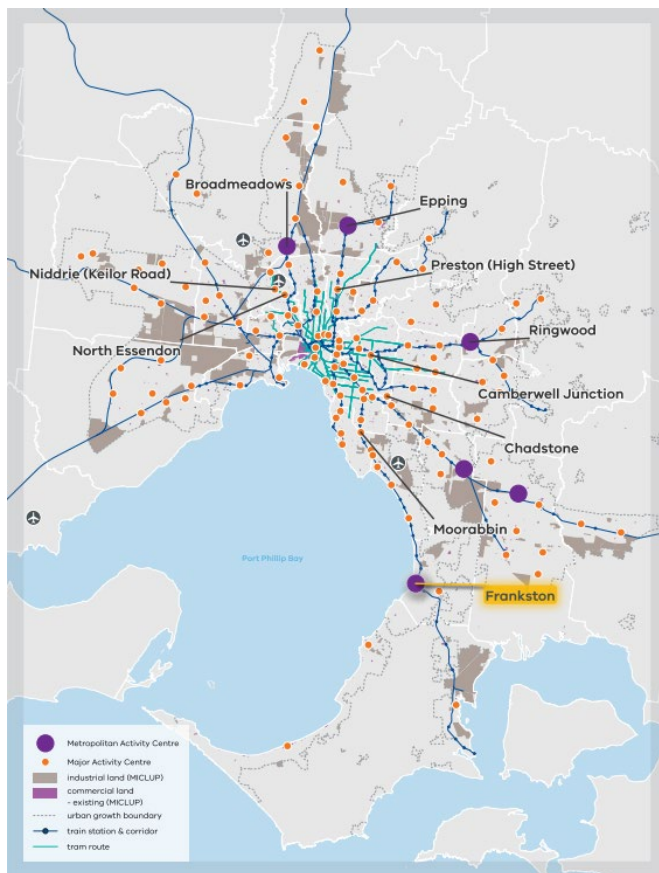
This is Referral 7. The Minister's referral letter for Frankston dated 25 October 2024 is included in [Appendix B](#).

The Minister seeks the Committee's advice on a specific issue as outlined in the letter of referral and shown in the Overview.

1.2 Frankston Activity Centre

The Frankston Activity Centre (Activity Centre) is located around 56 kilometres from the Melbourne Central City, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Regional context



Source: Draft Frankston Activity Centre Plan, Plan 1

The Activity Centre, shown in dark purple in Figure 2, is the commercial core of the precinct. The proposed walkable catchment area is shown in light purple.

Figure 2 Activity Centre catchment



Source: Draft Frankston Activity Centre Plan, Figure 1

1.3 The Committee's approach

The Committee has conducted its assessment process in accordance with the procedural requirements of the Terms of Reference, in particular Clauses 9, 10, 12 and 18. It has reported on all relevant matters in accordance with its Terms of Reference, particularly Clause 16.

Clause 12 of its Terms of Reference require the Committee to:

... conduct its work with a view to maximising efficiency and timeliness. This may include conducting reviews 'on the papers' without oral hearings where the Committee considers it appropriate depending on the nature of the matter referred.

Clause 18 requires the Committee to submit its report to the Minister and the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) no later than 10 business days from receipt of the referral. This timeframe did not allow for a Hearing to consider oral submissions or evidence on the Referral.

Given the targeted nature of the Committee's scope, issues to be considered and advice required, and reporting timeframes, the Committee considered an on the papers process to be appropriate.

1.4 Limitations

The Committee has confined its consideration to the referred matter, as directed in the referral letter (see Appendix A).

Despite the confined nature of the matter on which the Committee's advice is sought, a lot of material was referred to the Committee. This did not include draft controls for the Activity Centre, although a sample Built Form Overlay (BFO) schedule (for Frankston) was provided. In the time available, the Committee has not been able to comprehensively review all the referred material. It has focused on those parts which relate to the matter on which the Committee's advice is sought.

The targeted consultation in relation to the draft Frankston Activity Centre Plan, VPA, 2024 (Activity Centre Plan) resulted in 734 submissions. The only submission referred to the Committee was from Frankston City Council (Council). The Committee has only considered this submission, and only insofar as it relates to the matter on which the Committee's advice is sought, that is, the extent of the proposed catchment boundary.

The Activity Centre Plan is a form of structure plan. Ordinarily, structure plans would be supported by several centre specific background reports covering a range of technical disciplines, for example strategic planning, future population targets and yields, capacity analysis, built form and urban design, traffic and transport, community infrastructure needs and so on.

The Committee was provided with two background urban design reports, which relate to the Activity Centre Program (ACP) more broadly:

- *City of Centres: Development of typology-based built form controls*, Sheppard & Cull, May 2024 (City of Centres Report)
- *Activity Centre Program Urban Design draft background summary report*, VPA, 2024 (engagement version and Committee version) (Urban Design Background Report).

The referred material did not include any background material relating specifically to Frankston or its Activity Centre Plan.

The Urban Design Background Report does not apply to centres that have recent strategic work (including Frankston). Nor does it apply to walkable catchments. While it provides useful background context and understanding of the Activity Centre Plan for the Activity Centre itself, the Committee has not considered the Urban Design Background Report in detail in preparing its advice in relation to Frankston.

The Committee is aware that Council has recently undertaken a comprehensive review of its Activity Centre that resulted in a Panel Hearing and report (Amendment C160fran) that was delivered to Council on 30 August 2024. It is aware that Council largely adopted the Panel recommendations and the Amendment is now with DTP and the Minister for gazettal.

The Activity Centre Plan provides limited information about the existing planning controls that apply to the Activity Centre. No information was provided about the existing planning controls that apply in the catchment, or whether it is proposed to retain, change or remove the existing

controls. For the purposes of this Report, the Committee has assumed that the existing controls will be amended upon finalisation of Amendment C160fran.

Consistent with the assumption of the Referral 1 Committee, this Committee has assumed the existing overlays in the catchment will be retained, but the residential zones will be replaced with the Walkable Catchment Zone (WCZ).

The Committee notes the referral letter indicated the Activity Centre Plan has been prepared by the VPA on behalf of DTP and will enable delivery of approximately 4,000 – 6,300 dwellings in proximity to established jobs, services and public transport. The Committee has no real understanding of how this is consistent with the Frankston Metropolitan Activity Centre Structure Plan that is currently awaiting gazettal.

The Committee did not have the benefit of a public Hearing or any discussions or evidence (in support or contradictory) that may have assisted it to better understand the strategic basis of the Activity Centre Plan or the background documents which informed the selection of Frankston as one of the 10 pilot Activity Centres. Nor did it have the benefit of hearing from those in State Government who selected the centres, or from the consultants who prepared the supporting documents. Further, while the referred material included a submission from Council, the Committee did not have the benefit of discussing any aspect of the Activity Centre Plan or Council's submission with the Council officers.

Clause 13 of the Committee's Terms of Reference state:

13. The Committee may invite the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), a relevant Council and/or any other party to identify or address any matters through further written comments (noting that this does not extend the time for provision of a Report as required by Clause 19).

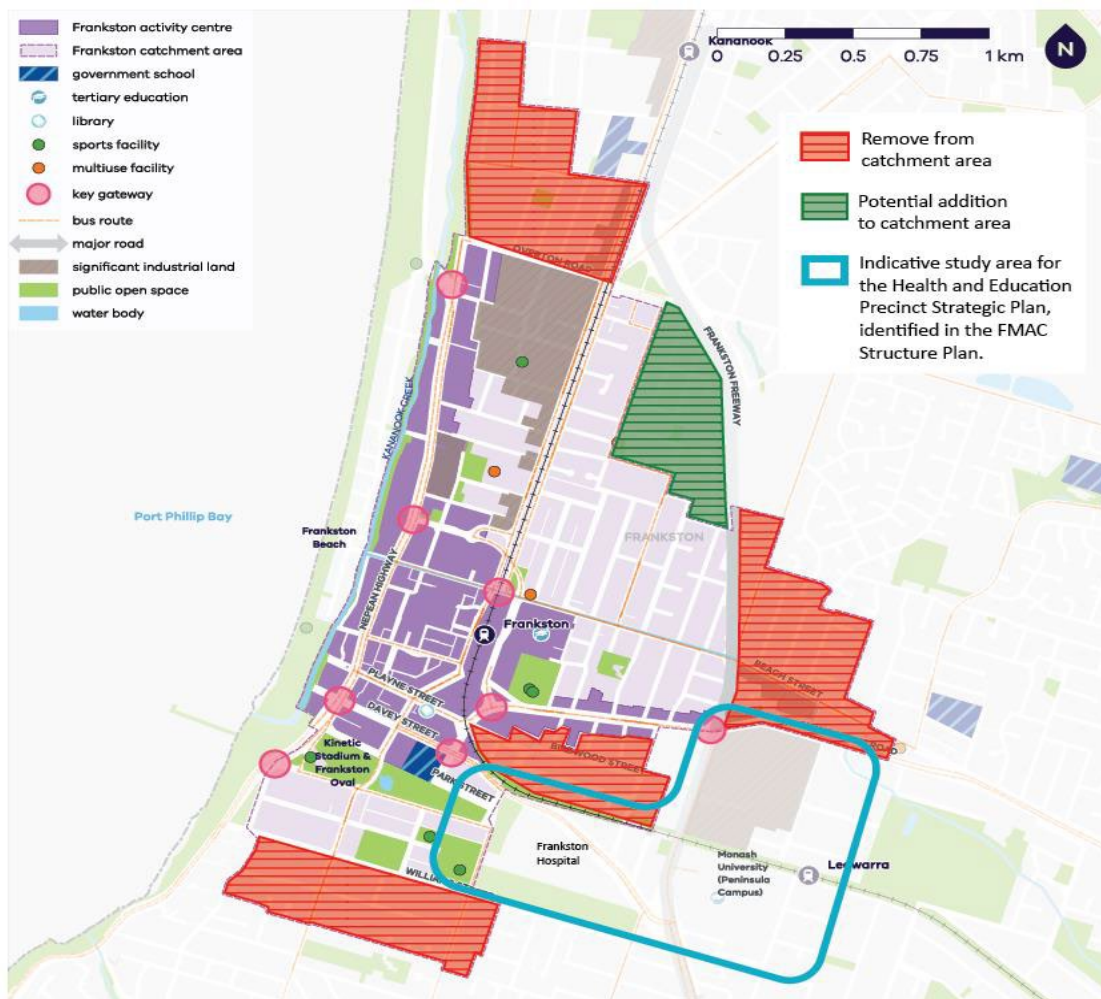
Given the 10 business day reporting timeframe, the Committee chose not to request further information pursuant to Clause 13, as it would not have been practical and may have compromised the process from a procedural fairness perspective.

The Committee has prepared this Report within the 10 day timeframe under the Terms of Reference. Given the limitations outlined above, the Committee has largely had to accept the material at face value. The advice contained in this Report should not be taken as a comprehensive merits review of the Frankston Activity Centre Plan. It is targeted advice strictly confined to the matter in the referral letter.

2 Summary of referred issue and finding

The referral included the following plan, which highlights the area to the south of Williams Street that is the only matter for this Committee's consideration:

Figure 3 Areas to be included/excluded



The issue and summary of the referred matter is taken directly from the referral letter.

Table 1 **Summary of referred issues and recommendations**

Issue	Summary	Findings and Recommendation
Catchment boundary extent	Having regard to the advice sought on the catchment boundary in the common matters (Referral 2), please advise if the recommended change to the extent of the proposed catchment boundary for Frankston is consistent with the intended purpose.	<p>The Committee finds:</p> <p>The recommended change to the walkable catchment boundary in that Areas 1 and 2 are removed, and Area 3 is included, as noted in Appendix 6 of the Frankston Activity Centre ‘Key matter Report’ 23 October 2024. is acceptable.</p> <p>The Committee recommends:</p> <p>The area to the south of Williams Street should not be included in the walkable catchment area for the Frankston Activity Centre.</p>

3 Analysis

3.1 Key policy drivers

The Terms of Reference (in Clause 16) require the Committee to address the referred matters and its recommendations in the context of:

- Victoria's Housing Statement, The Decade Ahead 2024-2034
- Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 or any equivalent replacement planning strategy.

Key policy drivers in the Housing Statement relevant to planning for activity centres include, to:

- introduce clear planning controls to deliver an additional 60,000 homes around an initial 10 activity centres across Melbourne: Broadmeadows, Camberwell Junction, Chadstone, Epping, Frankston, Moorabbin, Niddrie (Keilor Road), North Essendon, Preston (High Street) and Ringwood
- introduce activity centre plans to guide investment in the things a growing suburb needs like community facilities, public spaces and parks
- incentivise affordable housing.

Key policy drivers in Plan Melbourne relevant to planning for Activity Centres include, to:

- encourage increased housing diversity and density in activity centres
- create inclusive, vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods
- provide a diverse range of jobs, activities and housing in centres that are well served by public transport
- provide certainty about the scale of growth in the suburbs
- support a network of vibrant neighbourhood activity centres Support new housing in activity centres and other places that offer good access to jobs, services and public transport
- facilitate housing that offers choice and meets changing household needs

Plan Melbourne includes a number of directions in relation to metropolitan activity centres. Of relevance:

- Direction 1.2 notes that the distribution of jobs across Melbourne is uneven, with outer suburbs and growth areas generally having less access to jobs than middle and inner Melbourne. It states that metropolitan activity centres will be focuses for growth to cater to the needs of their wider regional population and offer access to a broad range of goods and services. They will be hubs for public transport services and play a major service delivery role, attracting broad investment in education, health and housing at higher densities
- Direction 2.2 states that locating medium and higher-density development near services, jobs and public transport supports the objectives of consolidation and housing choice. It states there are opportunities for higher and medium-density development in middle suburbs including in metropolitan activity centres.

Frankston is a designated Metropolitan Activity Centre. Council recently finalised a significant strategic review of the Activity Centre and has progressed the Planning Scheme Amendment to the Minister for approval.

3.2 Common issues – walkable catchment boundary

The Committee considered how a walkable catchment boundary could be determined in its Report No 2. It noted, amongst other matters:

... walkability should consider the time it takes to walk to the Activity Centre core, not just the distance (in metres) to the centre. Although it typically takes around 10 minutes to walk about 800 metres, it can take significant longer if the walker has to cross busy roads or other barriers. Crossing multiple sequences of pedestrian lights can add significant time to a trip and the metric of 800 metres may need to be adjusted in some instances to balance the additional time it takes to walk to the core. Further, poor pedestrian amenity is a factor that will limit use of some routes. The walkable catchment boundary should be further refined to ensure that the average walker takes up to about 10 minutes to walk to the Activity Centre core.

Catchment boundaries should also be revised consistent with the criteria to:

- align along roads, rail, rivers or other easily discernible and consistent boundaries, including zone boundaries
- avoid creating small pockets at the edge, where a more consistent edge could be created nearby
- avoid aligning along rear or side boundaries between residential properties
- exclude any area separated by built or topographic barriers such as divided arterial roads and steep topography with restrictive, hostile or unsafe connectivity.

The Committee considers the Frankston walkable catchment area, as modified, is generally consistent with the above criteria, except for the area to the south of Williams Street.

3.3 Consideration of walkable catchment boundary in Frankston South

Council officers made a submission to the VPA on this matter that focused on the work it had recently undertaken in preparing and approving the Frankston Metropolitan Activity Centre Structure Plan. One of the issues raised related to the extent of the Activity Centre catchment boundary and it noted three areas sought be excluded and one area included to that recommended by the VPA work.

The areas to be excluded were identified as areas to the:

- north of Overton Road
- east of the Frankston Freeway
- south of Williams Street

One area to the west of the Frankston Freeway was sought to be included within the catchment boundary.

The Committee was provided with the Frankston submission which identified these areas, noting, in particular the area to the south of Williams Street, as shown in Figure 3.

The VPA considered these matters and agreed with the Council position, except for the land to the south of Williams Street.

The Committee inspected those areas, and particularly the area to the south of Williams Road. Council submitted the area “... is of distinct and unique character, predominantly due to the areas elevation and views and is adjacent to Frankston South, which is an area of high value character”. The Committee notes there is no heritage or neighbourhood character overlay on this land.

In undertaking its site inspection, the Committee observed the distance of Williams Street to the Frankston core and the topography of the land to the north and south of Williams Street. Further, the area to the north of Williams Street includes two large areas of public open space located between Williams Street and Nolan Street and Spring Lane. These areas are encumbered to a certain degree by its sloping topography. It would be reasonably difficult for many people to walk through that park to get to the core of the Activity Centre, therefore they would have to use abutting roads.

Overall, the Committee concludes it would not be an easy walk for many, in that the land is undulating and can be quite steep, particularly as one travels further south past Williams Street.

Further, the Frankston Hospital Precinct lies to the east of the area and it will in time, be a high vehicle activity area (patient, visitor and medical/nursing/support staff cars, ambulance and police vehicles).

Upon its review, the Committee concurs with the Council position and it recommends the walkable catchment boundary should be at Williams Street. Retaining the walkable catchment boundary at Williams Street will not impact on the intended purpose, role or function of the Frankston Metropolitan Activity Centre.

The Committee recommends:

Exclude the area to the south of Williams Street from the walkable catchment area boundary for the Frankston Activity Centre.

Appendix A Terms of Reference

Relevant clauses are extracted below.

Purpose

4. The purpose of the Committee is to provide timely advice to the Minister for Planning on specific matters referred to it relating to strategic and built form work undertaken in relation to the ACP to inform the preparation of clear new planning controls in and around the 10 activity centres identified in *Victoria's Housing Statement, The decade ahead, 2024-2034* to deliver 60,000 more homes.
5. The objective of the Committee is to provide consistent advice for activity centre planning and outcomes in relation to the Activity Centres Program in a transparent, timely and cost-efficient process on any matter referred to it.

Referral

14. A referral may be provided by the Minister or delegate. A referral letter will set out the specific matters on which the Committee is to provide advice, as well as any specific matters on which advice is not to be provided. The referral letter to the Committee will be a public document.
15. Any referral must be accompanied by relevant information to assist the Committee's review provided by DTP and/or the VPA. This may include (but will not necessarily be limited to):
 - a. Relevant strategic work undertaken by Council, DTP or VPA for the relevant activity centre
 - b. Referred submissions
 - c. A summary of key issues raised in submissions
 - d. Proposed changes in response to issues raised in submissions
 - e. An index listing each document referred to the Committee.

Advisory committee report and recommendations

16. For each matter referred, the Committee must produce a written report that provides a succinct summary of the key issues and its recommendations. The report must address the referred matters and its recommendations in the context of:
 - a. *Victoria's Housing Statement, The Decade Ahead 2024-2034*;
 - b. Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 or any equivalent replacement planning strategy;
17. The Committee may address more than one referred matter and combine its assessment of these in a single report.
18. The Committee is required to submit each report to the Minister and DTP no later than 10 business days from receipt of the referral and all accompanying information required by clause 15. DTP must give at least five business days' notice of each likely referral to ensure the Committee is able to source appropriately skilled Members.

Appendix B Referral letter

25 October 2024

Sarah Raso
Lead Chair
Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee
Planning Panels Victoria
planning.panels@transport.vic.gov.au

Dear Sarah,

Referral No. 7: Activity Centres Program - Frankston Activity Centre Plan Referral to the Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee

I refer to planning matters that form part of the Activity Centres Program (ACP), an initiative from Victoria's Housing Statement, The decade ahead, 2024-2034.

This referral relates specifically to the Frankston Activity Centre Plan. The Frankston Activity Plan will be implemented through a forthcoming Planning Scheme Amendment to introduce new planning controls for the activity centre.

Background

The Activity Centres program is included in the Victorian Government's Housing Statement and seeks to deliver an additional 60,000 homes around an initial 10 activity centres across Melbourne. The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) is leading the Activity Centres Program in partnership with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA).

The Frankston Activity Centre plan has been prepared by the VPA on behalf of DTP and will enable delivery of approximately 4,000-6,300 dwellings in proximity to established jobs, services and public transport.

On 22 August 2024, the Minister for Planning appointed the Activity Centres Standing Advisory Committee (the Committee) to provide consistent advice for activity centre planning and outcomes in relation to the Activity Centres Program in a transparent, timely and cost-efficient process on any matter referred to it.

The project has generated significant community interest and a total of 734 submissions, including survey responses (numeric and free text), in-person feedback at consultation events, and written submissions were received for the Frankston activity centre. Responses were received from current and potential future residents, businesses, government agencies, authorities, community groups, members of the development industry and Frankston City Council.

A summary of the targeted engagement undertaken, and analysis of the matters raised following the targeted engagement; and changes proposed to the Frankston Activity Centre plan in response to these submissions; is included with the referral of documentation.

Referral

In accordance with Clause 14 of your Terms of Reference (August 2024), and delegation provided to me, I have determined to seek advice and recommendations from the Committee on activity centre planning matters. Only select submissions received during consultation which are relevant to the matters listed in the table below are being referred to the Committee. The Committee's advice is only sought on the matters listed in the table below.

MATTER	ADVICE TO BE PROVIDED
Catchment boundary extent	Having regard to the advice sought on the catchment boundary in the common matters (Referral 2), please advise if the recommended change to the extent of the proposed catchment boundary for Frankston is consistent with the intended purpose.

In accordance with Clause 12 of your Terms of Reference, the Committee must conduct its work with a view to maximising efficiency and timeliness. As such, I look forward to the Committee providing its report to the Minister for Planning no later than 10 business days from receipt of this referral, in accordance with Clause 18 of the Terms of Reference.

Please find enclosed the supporting documents required by Clause 15 of the terms of reference.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact Stefan Bettiol, Planning Manager at the Department of Transport and Planning.

Yours sincerely,



Natalie Reiter
Deputy Secretary Strategy & Precincts
Department of Transport and Planning

Encl. The following referral documents have been shared with you electronically:

- Att A: Report addressing key matters
- Att B: Urban Design Draft Background Summary Report
- Att C: Urban Design Draft Background Summary Report (Engagement version)
- Att D: City of Centres Report
- Att E: Frankston Draft Activity Centre Plan
- Att F: Submissions
- Att G: Document list

Appendix C Referred information

No.	Date	Description	Provided by
1	28 Oct 24	Referral Letter dated 25 October 2024	Department of Transport and Planning (DTP)
2	28 Oct 24	Frankston Key Matters Report, VPA, 2024	DTP
3	28 Oct 24	Frankston Draft Activity Centre Plan, VPA, 2024	DTP
4	28 Oct 24	<i>City of Centres: Development of typology-based built form controls</i> , Sheppard & Cull, May 2024	DTP
5	28 Oct 24	<i>Activity Centre Program Urban Design draft background summary report</i> , VPA, August 2024 (engagement version)	DTP
6	28 Oct 24	<i>Activity Centre Program Urban Design draft background summary report</i> , VPA, October 2024 (Committee version) including Appendices	DTP
7	28 Oct 24	Activity Centre Program Universal Submissions, Key Matters Report, VPA, October 2024	DTP
8	28 Oct 24	Submission – Frankston City Council	DTP
9	28 Oct 24	Frankston Document List	DTP